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ART. I.—MARYVILLE THEOLOGY.

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*"Seven Conversations between Athanasius and Docilis on Theological Subjects, founded principally on the four following propositions. I. God a Moral Governor. II. Man a Moral Agent. III. God the Efficient Cause. IV. Man a Passive Recipient, or Man a Creature capable of being acted upon by another agent.*

*Questions on the System of Didactic Theology taught in the Southern and Western Theological Seminary. By Rev. Isaac Anderson, D. D. Maryville, 1833.*

THE theological course of a minister in an ordinary station is a matter of comparatively little importance to the community. If he depart from the received doctrines, there are constitutional means, by which he is readily reclaimed, or removed from the ministry. But if he occupy an important position in the church, the aspect of the case is entirely changed. His errors may thus infect multitudes, before an ecclesiastical process can reach him. His station itself gives him a control so extensive, as to mould into his own form the theology of others, and to draw around him an army sufficiently powerful to overawe the advocates of truth and to protect himself from censure, or deposition. It often occurs,

that the efforts, which are made for his reformation, are attributed to envy of his talents, his influence, or his success ; and thus a popular clamor is raised, public indignation unreasonably excited, and vast mischiefs inflicted on those, who devoutly seek his good and that of Zion.

Nor is this true, simply of those who occupy the pulpit. It is specially applicable to such, as are employed by the church to train her sons for the ministry. No other men have such facilities for collecting a phalanx to defend them in the inculcation of any error into which they may fall. Instances of this sort are too numerous and recent to require specification. In such cases there has always been found an extensive body of men already drilled for the battle, and qualified to testify, that the error itself is perfectly compatible with an enlightened understanding of the Scriptures, and of the Confession of Faith, that the complainants are "bigots," "errorists," "ignorant and ambitious men." And this original body of defenders is soon followed by another, who solemnly aver, that the Confession of Faith sustains both the *truth* and the *error*, that it was originally designed to have a double meaning. Thus the symbols of our faith are sometimes treated, as if they were altogether as equivocal and ambiguous as a heathen oracle.

In such an age it has pleased a holy Providence, that we should live. Errors, the most startling, have been publicly proposed and taught. Those, who ought to have known the truth and been foremost in defending it, are found in several instances either openly to abandon it, or to sustain those, who inculcate views entirely at variance with it. Thus theological error has grown bold, walked at large and penetrated the very heart of the church, whilst the fortresses of Zion have in some cases been silent, and in others have fallen an easy prey to the destroyer.

In confirmation of several particulars in the preceding statements, we offer the "*Seven Conversations between Athanasius and Docilis*."\* This book is uniformly attributed to the Reverend Isaac Anderson, D. D., "President and Professor of Theology in the Southern and Western Theological Seminary, Maryville, Tennessee. With these also we present a volume entitled "*Questions on the System of Didactic Theology taught in the Southern and Western*

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\* Second Edition, Knoxville, 1835.



*Theological Seminary, by Rev. Isaac Anderson, D. D.* It is not our design to notice all the remarkable things contained in these volumes, but only to bring forth into open day a few of their peculiarities. In our quotations from the "*Seven Conversations*," we shall cite, *as the views of the Author*, the expressions of Athanasius, and *those only* of his pupil, to which his teacher gives his approbation.

It may be seriously questioned, whether all the peculiarities of the New Theology in these volumes deserve the name of heresy. There is a suggestion respecting the nature of man, which pertains to the department of Physiology, and ought immediately to be tested by the experiments of this class of philosophers; or if they should deem themselves incompetent to elicit the truth, we would refer the whole subject to the practical agriculturist, and anxiously wait his decision. The question is "what belongs" to the "animal nature" of man? Dr. Anderson answers, "1. An organized body. 2. Animal and perhaps vegetable life. 3. Appetites. 4. Passions. 5. Affections."\* On these constituents of man it is improper to comment, till gardeners and agriculturists shall inform us, whether this "VEGETABLE" can be cultivated in the same manner, as every other "herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of the whole earth."

Leaving this part of the subject for the adjudication of naturalists, we proceed to discuss Dr. Anderson's views respecting the doctrine of **DIVINE DECREES**. He defines a decree to be "the purpose or determination of a moral agent's own mind respecting what he himself will do." He says, "the immediate object of the divine decree" is "his own providence, agency, or efficiency."† "God purposes, decrees, or determines what he himself will do in bringing to pass, all things that do come to pass."‡ According to the standards of the Presbyterian church "the decrees of God are his eternal purpose according to the counsel of his own will, whereby for his own glory he hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass." Nothing is excepted, nothing omitted. But the Reverend author departs so far from this doctrine as to say, that God purposes what *he himself* will do in bringing to pass all things, &c. This statement certainly leaves room for the inference, that others may purpose what they

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\* Questions, &c., p. 25.

† Ibid. p. 36.

‡ Seven Conversations, pp. 15, 16.

will do in bringing to pass the things, that do come to pass, and that these purposes and acts are not included in the divine decrees. As long as the author thinks it "will do" to hold, that man "is always free as a moral agent, but depends on the agency of God for the continuance of his being and the exercise of all his capacities," so long will it be impossible for him to deny, that men independently purpose what they will do in bringing to pass the things, that come to pass within the circle of their influence. The same thing is true of the higher orders of being. And are these purposes and actions excluded from the decrees of God? Do *his* decrees respect merely his own actions? Are *their* decrees by some fortuitous concurrence made to coincide with those of the Almighty? When he purposes what he will do in bringing any event to pass, do they uniformly purpose to do whatever remains to be done for its accomplishment. If this be his view of the subject, then it follows, that he plainly rejects the Scriptural doctrine of the decrees of God, and holds that the universe is not bound together by any controlling purpose, or agency, nor directed to the accomplishment of any great and glorious end!

We should have felt ourselves to be exceedingly uncharitable in maintaining this view of the subject, if the author had not severely censured an opponent for *representing him as saying*, that "God purposes, determines, or decrees, *all things*, that come to pass,"—if he had not called on his readers to notice the difference between his own "words" and those in this sentence, which his opponent "makes him say,"—if he had not demanded of his opponent, "Is this fair dealing?" "Why have you been guilty of this unfairness?"\* To represent the author of the Seven Conversations as a believer in the doctrine, that "*God decrees all things that come to pass*"—to maintain, that *HE IS orthodox*, is an offence in *his own view*, which deserves severe castigation.

Notwithstanding this chastisement of his opponent we sincerely believe the Reverend author occasionally uses expressions, from which it may be inferred, that he does not at all times reject the doctrine that God decrees whatsoever comes to pass. He says, "All God's decrees will surely be accomplished, yet man has power to frustrate such decrees as are to be accomplished by man's instrumentality." To

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\* Seven Conversations. Reply to Quero in the Preface.

this his disciple (Docilis) replies, "Yet God infallibly, to secure the accomplishment of his decrees, acts on man as a passive recipient, so that he willingly does the things which fulfil the decrees of God." To this the author again replies, "You are right." But the decrees of God respect what **HE HIMSELF WILL DO** in bringing to pass all things that do come to pass. If the decrees of God respect all things, then *according to this doctrine*, God has purposed to do all things, for the decree respects only his own actions. The agency exercised on man is designed to make him "*willingly do the things which fulfil the decrees of God*,"—to make him do those things, which God had previously decreed, that "*he himself*" will do. This agency, therefore, *personally unites* men to God, makes *their* actions *his* actions, and thus fulfils his decrees. If the divine agency does not *personally unite* men to God, it certainly follows, *according to this doctrine* that God changes his decrees, and employs men to do the things which he had formerly decreed, that "*he himself*" would do. The man who inculcates the former, is a **PANTHEIST**, and he who holds these principles and is not driven by them to **PANTHEISM**, must have but a feeble conviction of the divine immutability.

The next remarkable doctrine in these works respects man as a passive being. The author says, "man is a passive recipient, or man is a creature capable of being acted upon by another agent."\* This *passive reception, or capacity "of being acted upon"* is so peculiar as to require attention. The following statements consist of the sayings of the author, and of his pupil in certain cases which receive, in the Conversations, his unqualified approbation. "Man as a moral agent has nothing to do with any matter but laws and motives." "A decree is neither a law, nor a motive; then decrees must respect man as a passive recipient."† "To give laws, or present motives to a man as a passive recipient would seem to me as absurd, as to reason with blocks and with stones."‡ "A creature considered as passive cannot be holy, nor unholy, any more than a block or stone. But if a creature is passive in some respects and is also active, then all the holiness, or sin, that belongs to him, belongs to him as an active intelligent creature, or moral agent, and does not belong to him in the respects in which he is passive."§ Now

\* Seven Conv. p. 9. † Ibid. p. 16. ‡ Ibid. p. 14. § Ibid. p. 19.

in what respect is a human being passive under the work of the Spirit? Does not his passivity consist in not opening the eyes of his understanding spiritually and savingly to understand the things of God? And is there nothing unholy in spiritual blindness? Does not his passivity consist in his not putting away his heart of stone, nor taking a heart of flesh? And is there nothing unholy in having a hard and impenitent heart? Does not his passivity consist in his having an unrenewed will, not determined to that which is good nor ready to go to Jesus Christ? And is there nothing unholy in not having a renewed will, nor a determination to that which is good, nor faith in our Lord Jesus Christ? Is there no sin in not co operating with the Holy Spirit in opening the eyes of the understanding, renewing the heart and determining the man to do the will of God? However true it is, that in respect to renovating himself man is altogether *passive*, is he innocent? That man is *passive* in regeneration, the scriptures abundantly teach, and the Confession of Faith *literally* declares, notwithstanding the *astonishing denial* of a recent writer in the Biblical Repository.\* But is there no sin in this passivity? What did Paul mean when he said, "I am carnal, sold under sin?" Did he mean that he had no more sin "than a block or a stone?" We cannot arrive at any other conclusion than that this **PASSIVE RECEPTION** occupies in these Conversations the place where the doctrine of a **DEPRAVED NATURE** ought to be inculcated; and hence, instead of saying that God renovates our corrupt hearts, the author asserts that "God as the efficient cause, acts on man a passive recipient, and then man as a moral agent turns from sin to holiness," and that "the commencement, continuation, and growth of holiness in the heart, are caused by the Influence of God, the efficient cause on man the passive recipient." That the words "passive recipients" are used by this author as a substitute for "depraved beings," and the whole doctrine of passive reception for that of a corrupted nature is rendered exceedingly probable by his declaration, that "all his (man's) obligations are founded on his character as a moral agent, and not on his character as a passive recipient," and that "a creature considered as passive cannot be holy nor unholy any more than a block or a stone."

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\* Rev. Samuel H. Cox, D. D., July 1839, p. 191.

Now, however much the author may feel that he has elucidated the doctrines of the Scriptures, yet his notion that the passivity of man in divine things is innocent, cannot be reconciled with the doctrine of a depraved nature. And it is, moreover, distinctly *Antinomian*. When the old divines and the Confession of Faith declare man to be *passive* in "effectual calling," they mean not, that he is passive in all respects, but simply in those wherein the call or regeneration consists. They mean that he does not convince himself of sin, nor take the stony heart out of his flesh, nor produce a heart of flesh within himself, nor determine his own will to that which is good, nor come to Christ of his own natural propensity and original motion. But whilst they mean that the sinner is not the author of the change which constitutes him a saint; and whilst they affirm, that in respect to the agency which renovates him, he is altogether *passive*: they do not mean that he is *passive in receiving* this agency. They maintain that a criminal darkness resides in the understanding, which comprehendeth not the things of God, and resists the convincing operations of the Spirit; that enmity and rebellion against God, opposition to his law and gospel, aversion to good and inclination to evil occupy his heart; that the affections are disordered and fixed on sinful gratifications, rather than on the perfections and the service of God; and that his conscience is so defiled as to put evil for good and darkness for light. According to these views *this is all the passivity* with which man receives the saving operations of the Most High. Though he is passive in respect to devising and executing the agency by which he is renewed, and does not even *concur* in the operation which renovates his inner man and prepares him to produce the fruits of holiness, yet this is not all. He resists it. It is his nature to resist it. It is his habit to resist it. Instead, then, of being an *active co-operator* in his own regeneration, or even a "*passive recipient*" of it, he withstands it; and the grand thing effected in regeneration is not the alteration of some **PASSIVE RECEPTION**, as innocent as a block or a stone, but the renovation of the **CARNAL MIND**, which is "enmity against God, not subject to his law, neither indeed can be." It is not some change in man, as a passive recipient, but the taking of the "stony heart out of his flesh," and the giving of "a heart of flesh," that he may walk in the statutes and keep the ordinances of God. Now if there be no sin in the carnal

mind, in blindness of the understanding, in enmity against God, in a stony heart, in a defiled conscience, then the doctrine of the author and his disciples is true,—then it is true, that in those respects in which God operates on him, he is *passive* and “cannot be holy, or unholy any more than a block, or a stone,”—then it is also true, that there is no such thing as the depravity of human nature. This is the conclusion to which the terms and reasonings of the author infallibly tend. And evidence is certainly wanting, that it is not under some circumstances and at some times his theological and practical faith.

But as in all other cases when men have been learned in the truth, but subsequently fall into unhappy speculations, the author seems occasionally to forget the language of his theory, and to use that of the orthodox. Thus in accounting for “the need of a divine agency,” he says, “the heart of man is desperately wicked, so much opposed to holiness and so selfish, that nothing but Almighty power will change it from sin to holiness.”\* Here he certainly speaks of the heart as “*passive*.” He does not say, the heart *acts* desperately wicked, but it *is* desperately wicked. He does not say, it *opposes* holiness, but it *is opposed* to holiness. He does not say, it *acts* selfishly, but it *is* so selfish. Is this language indicative of “voluntary exercises and acts?” Does it not indicate a *corruption of nature*, a state of opposition to good, rather than the “voluntary exercise” of this sinfulness? Into this statement the author seems to have been drawn by the occurrence to his mind of the passage, “the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked.” That this is not his ordinary mode of treating the subject appears from his Theological Questions. Here he asks, “what is sin?” and here too he answers, “It is the opposite of benevolence, or it is selfishness.” Again he asks, “what is selfishness?” “It is a supreme regard for myself, not because I have a capacity, that is properly the object of such regard, but merely because I am myself.”† Now although in his chapter of Questions on regeneration he uses the terms, “heart,” “by nature totally depraved,” “restored to the image of God,” and similar phrases of orthodoxy, yet his whole view of this subject seems to be foreign to the scriptures and the confession of Faith; for he asks, what is

\* Seven Conv. p. 21.

† Theol. Questions. p. 52.

produced by regeneration? and he answers, "Love to being in general capable of happiness." Now, who does not know, that "a supreme regard for myself," and "Love to being in general," are acts of the heart. According to these definitions sin and holiness are *acts* of the mind; and if any thing but acts are changed by regeneration, it must be some '*passive reception*' as innocent "as a block, or a stone." Thus it is apparent, that the Doctor has not abandoned his view of *passive reception* in regeneration.

Now, if the author's definition of "what is *produced* by regeneration be correct; it follows, that it may be substituted instead of the word or phrase, by which this *production* is declared in the scriptures. If it be thus introduced into Ezekiel 11: 19, the passage will be: 'I will give them one heart, and I will put "*love to being in general capable of happiness*" within you, and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them "*love to being in general capable of happiness*."' If it be introduced into Psalm 51: 10, the passage will be: 'Create in me "*love to being in general capable of happiness*."' If it be introduced into Eph. 2: 10, the passage will not be "We are his workmanship," but we are "*love to being in general capable of happiness*," created in Christ Jesus unto good works.' If it be inserted in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, 5: 17, it will not be, "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature;" but he is "*love to being in general capable of happiness*," old things are passed away, behold all things are become "*love to being in general capable of happiness*." Into such perplexities and incongruities does the theologian fall, who substitutes his own philosophy for the declarations of the word of God.

But however remarkable these views may appear to intelligent men, and however unlike the gospel of Christ they really are, we are compelled to proceed to the statement of others, which in our view are *totally* subversive of the Christian religion. In their own region the author and his associates are denominated Hopkinsians. But, although we are not willing to appear as the defenders of Dr. Samuel Hopkins, and his peculiarities, we solemnly aver, that these men bear as little resemblance to him in his views on the atonement, as to any other man amongst the living or the dead. And were he now alive, and informed of the errors of those, who, in the south-western regions, bear his name,



he would mourn and say "O, that my head were waters and my eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people." Nothing is more common with these gentlemen than to deny, that Christ suffered the penalty of the law. But Dr. Hopkins explicitly says, "The law could not be fulfilled by Jesus Christ without his suffering the penalty of it, and obeying it perfectly, for to give up the penalty and not execute the threatening of the law, when it is transgressed, is to dissolve and destroy the law." "Thus we see how Christ suffered for sin, was made a curse, and suffered the curse of the law, the curse of God." It is evident from scripture, that the law of God does admit of a substitute, both in obeying the precepts and suffering the penalty of it.\* But Dr. Isaac Anderson, who is understood to glory in his Hopkinsianism, unequivocally rejects this doctrine. In his Theological Questions he asks respecting Christ, "Did he then, suffer the penalty of the law?" "Can you also show that he did not suffer the penalty from the fact that he suffered as high priest? Ans. Yes." . . . "What is your sixth argument? Ans. Christ suffered the death of the cross, but the law never threatened that. 2. Christ suffered but a short time, but its penalty was eternal. 3. Sinners will endure what Christ did not, remorse of conscience and despair."† But while Dr. Anderson thus rejects the *great* position of Dr. Hopkins, that Christ suffered the penalty of the law, it is certain, that he also rejects other principles which have been dear to the saints in all generations. Dr. Hopkins declares, that "all the ends of the threatening and of the penalty are as fully answered by the sufferings of Christ, as they could be by the execution of it on the sinner," . . . and that God has agreeable to the strictest truth executed the threatening of his law according to the true intent and meaning of it."‡ But our Athanasius declares, that Christ's sufferings were not the literal execution of justice."§ But if they were not the *literal* execution of justice, what are they? Is the atonement a *literal* execution of injustice? Is it a *figurative* execution of justice? This last seems, indeed, to be his meaning; for in a dialogue between Christ and the Law he supposes the Law to ask

\* The System of Doctrines contained in Divine Revelation, &c. by Samuel Hopkins, D. D. Second Edition, vol I. p. 398, 420.  
 † Ibid. p. 419, p. 421. ‡ Quest. p. 34. § Seven Con. p. 50.



Christ, "What is the design of the atonement?" And he supposes the Saviour to reply, "It is to answer the same governmental purposes, that the punishment of the sinner would answer according to thy penalty."\* With the exception of the personal guilt of the sufferer, and the literal execution of the penalty, he says, "The atonement expresses the very same governmental principles, that the punishment does, namely, that God is determined to support the authority of law and punish sin; only it expresses these principles much stronger than the punishment of the sinner could express them."† This, then, is the design of the atonement. It is intended "TO EXPRESS THE SAME GOVERNMENTAL PRINCIPLES THAT PUNISHMENT DOES." The Rev. Abel Pearson, D. D., a pupil of Dr. Anderson, and a member of the same presbytery, has published an "ANALYSIS OF THE PRINCIPLES OF THE DIVINE GOVERNMENT." This volume has received the unqualified recommendation of Dr. Anderson, who says, "The candid and intelligent reader will acknowledge, that he lands him safely in the haven of truth, where his vessel may ride secure from the tempests and tornados of error." In this volume Dr. Pearson denies, that Christ suffered the penalty of the law. Instead of teaching that Christ suffered to "satisfy Divine justice," he says that in "his (Christ's) case, had there been any fair legal process, he would have been honorably acquitted in order to satisfy Divine justice." But might not Divine justice call for satisfaction on the sinner's account? Yes, it might and would call; but neither that, nor any other justice would call for sufferings from an acknowledged innocent person on the sinner's account." Dr. Pearson also declares the atonement to be a "Divine governmental principle" "as applicable to the whole human family as to any part," "and as all rational beings are subjects of the same government, the Divine Ruler may call it into use, whenever there is need for it. In his view it is applicable to all mankind, to all worlds where there are sinners, and to all devils. He even says, that Satan himself might be pardoned, "if it were not for his wicked heart."‡

Although Dr. Anderson so honorably introduced this

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\* Seven Conversations, p. 47.      † Seven Conversations.

‡ Analysis of the Principles of the Divine Government, &c. by Abel Pearson, pp. 115—136.

analysis to the world, there is evidence, that whatever his views of *the extent of the atonement then were*, he does not always believe it to be applicable to all worlds. But in his design he uniformly maintained, that it is governmental and expressive of certain specified principles. In the year 1837, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States specified certain prevalent errors and condemned them; of these the eighth is—"That the sufferings and death of Christ were not truly *vicarious and penal*, but symbolical, governmental and instructive only." In what respect now does the doctrine of Dr. Anderson and Dr. Pearson differ from this specified and condemned error? In what language could their views be more accurately expressed? What words could have been more fitly chosen to describe the theology of the Maryville professor, or of his pupils, or of the great body of his presbytery? What course, now, do these gentlemen take? Do they deny this to be an error? Do they openly confess and forsake it? Ah, no! They met together, and "*Resolved*, that this presbytery adheres to the confession of faith, the government and discipline of the Presbyterian Church with sincere and growing attachment; and regard the errors in doctrine prepared by the convention for the action of the General Assembly, as fraught with danger to the souls of men, dishonorable to God, and in direct opposition to his word, and to the system of doctrines in our confession of faith and catechism. And all presbyteries are bound by their ordination vows to call to account their members, who may be guilty of advocating and disseminating these detestable doctrines." After these solemn declarations, one would suppose, that **THESE BOOKS** would have been opened, and Dr. Anderson and Dr. Pearson "judged out of those things which are written in the books according to their works." But instead of this, the Union Presbytery, **THE VERY GARDEN OF THIS AND OTHER THEOLOGICAL ERRORS**, declares, "But we have no evidence, that these errors are widely disseminated in the Presbyterian Church, except the *ipse dixit* of a party, and we have too much reason to fear these errors were got up by a party for party purposes."\*

But the course of error is downward. The author of the Seven Conversations denied that Christ suffered the penalty

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\* Resolutions of Union Presbytery, East Tennessee, American Presbyterian, Oct. 26, 1837.

of the law, and that his sufferings were "the literal execution of justice." This seems to have led him into other errors respecting the ATONEMENT. Thus we find his disciple *Ducilis*, soon uttering the most remarkable sayings respecting this subject. "The atonement is the sufferings of Christ." "After Christ became incarnate, he was capable of suffering, and sufferings alone enter into the matter of the atonement." According to Athanasius the work of Christ in this world consisted of three things. 1. To offer an atonement. 2. To obey the moral law. 3. To be obedient unto death. But to be obedient unto death—(that is, *according to the Maryville interpretation*, to die in *obedience* to the command of God the Father, &c.,)—TO DIE constituted no part of the atonement. This was finished previously to his death. Thus Athanasius says, "Obedience does not enter into the matter of the atonement, nor any other thing but sufferings simply." "Christ knowing, that the sufferings he had covenanted with the Father to endure, were accomplished, and the atonement finished, gave up the Ghost." Amazing as this statement is, and shocking to every Christian, and utterly at variance with the whole Scripture, it is nevertheless boldly put forth. Instead of such assertions, Paul said to the saints of his own time, I delivered unto you first of all, that which I also received, how that our Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.\*

But, it may now be demanded, why did he die? This point is urged upon the author by his disciple, "You have said, Christ, knowing that the sufferings he had covenanted with his Father to endure, were accomplished and the atonement finished, gave up the Ghost." Now why did he die at all? &c. Under this inquiry the mind of Athanasius seems to be agitated. Instead now of his *positive affirmation*, that Christ knew the atonement to be finished, he says, "If it should be supposed, or even proved, that in the very article of separation of the human soul and body, there was nothing of suffering and of course nothing, that entered into the matter of the atonement, yet his actually giving up the Ghost, answered many important purposes." Of these the *first* is, Christians die. It behooved him to be made like his brethren. And "he took on him flesh and blood, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of

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\* See Seven Conversations, p. 26, p. 54, p. 43, p. 44.

death, that is the Devil." 2. "It had been predicted, that he should rise from the dead." "Now it was necessary that he should die, that he might be raised from the dead in this very way." 3. It was necessary that Christ should die and rise again, "that he might become the author of the general resurrection and the first fruits of them that rise."\* Into such subterfuges is Anathasius driven by his attempt to evade the doctrine, that Christ endured the penalty of the law.

The next step in this downward course is more remarkable than any of the preceding. To protect himself in the position, that Christ did not suffer the penalty of the law, he *first* maintained, that sufferings only enter into the matter of the atonement. He now advances another step and declares, that the "DEATH OF CHRIST WAS A VOLUNTARY ACT." To sustain this notion, he quotes detached parts of John 19: 28, 30, "Jesus knowing, that all things were now accomplished." "When Jesus, therefore, had received the vinegar, he said it is finished, and he bowed his head and gave up the ghost." As if these quotations were a continuous passage, and no intermediate suffering occurred either from his thirst, or his wounds, or abandonment by his Father, during the time, when "one took a sponge and filled it with vinegar and gave him to drink, and when he cried with a loud voice; the Doctor with his usual accuracy thus interprets this new combination of facts. "Christ knowing that the sufferings he had covenanted with the Father to endure, were accomplished and the atonement finished, gave up the ghost." "This giving up the ghost was a voluntary act. Matthew says this, he "yielded up the ghost." The language Luke uses is, "He said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit, and having thus said, he gave up the ghost." The language of each of the historians is descriptive of a voluntary act. Of course it was an act of obedience; but it was an act plainly distinct from the voluntary act of offering his sufferings for an atonement. His sufferings did not produce death. His dying was voluntary as he had declared it would be. "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself, I have power to lay it down and I have power to take it again. This commandment

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\* See Seven Conversations, pp. 44, 45, p. 52.

have I received from my Father." John 10: 17, 18. These Scriptures demonstrate, that Christ laid down his life of himself, that is, voluntarily.\*

This is the most remarkable passage which has been written by any man in the present generation. We have heard the theories of New Lights and the revelations of Perfectionists. But on this subject the author exceeds them all. The reason for this theory seems to be found in his rejection of the doctrine, that Christ suffered the penalty of the law. The argument by which he attempts to sustain it, is a perversion of the phrases, "*gave up the ghost*," "*yielded up the ghost*." Is it possible for the Doctor to believe that the phrase "*gave up the ghost*," denotes a *voluntary act*? Can it be true that the individual who "*gives up the ghost*," puts an end to his own life altogether irrespectively of the wounds and other external causes which ordinarily produce death? If this be so, then it follows, that many of the godly, as well as the abandoned, died voluntarily. It is written of Abraham, that he "*gave up the ghost*;" of Ishmael, that he "*gave up the ghost*;" of Isaac, that he "*gave up the ghost*;" of Jacob that "*he gathered up his feet into the bed and gave up the ghost*;" of the priests and elders of Judah who died of starvation in the time of Nebuchadnezzar, that they "*gave up the ghost in the city, while they sought bread to relieve their souls*;" and of Ananias, that "*he fell down and gave up the ghost*." If the declaration, that our Lord "*gave up the ghost*," proves that he was voluntary in his departure from this life, and that his sufferings did not produce his death, then it follows for the same reason, that the saints and even the reprobates of former times were voluntary in their death. But if the Doctor relies for evidence of his position not so much on the phrase, he "*gave up the ghost*," as on the language of Matthew, that he "*yielded up the ghost*," in what respect does his death differ from that of Sapphira, who "*fell down straightway and yielded up the ghost*"? Or if he arrive at his conclusion from the words of Christ in Luke, "*Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit*," in what particulars does the case differ from that of Stephen, who being stoned by the Jews, said, "*Lord Jesus receive my spirit*"? Thus no argument in favor of the allegation, that our Lord's death was a *voluntary act* can be derived from either of these

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\* Seven Conversations, pp. 43, 44.

forms of expression. Christ being crucified by his enemies "gave up the ghost," and Herod, being smitten by the angel of the Lord and eaten of worms, "gave up the ghost." Thus this attempt to show THAT OUR LORD WAS NOT SLAIN by his enemies; but in the fulfilment of his covenant with his Father, died by the application of his own inherent power, thus committing an act of SUPERNATURAL SUICIDE is utterly without foundation. What, then, are we to think of the declaration, that "HIS SUFFERINGS DID NOT PRODUCE DEATH."

There are several attitudes in which we wish to view this declaration. The church has always believed that Christ died of the wounds inflicted upon him by those who crucified him, exactly as any other individual dies in the same circumstances. Christians, indeed, admit that he submitted to these sufferings and this death for the redemption of his people. If he had not submitted, he could have prayed his father, and he would have given him "twelve legions of angels." He could have commanded the earth to open her mouth and swallow his enemies alive. He could have summoned the lightnings to consume them in the twinkling of an eye. But how then should the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be? In no other way had "the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God," as declared in his word, provided for the redemption of men except by Christ's deliverance to those, who by wicked hands took him and "crucified" him, and *slew* him. Though our Lord had power to rescue himself from them, yet in redeeming man it was necessary that he should abstain from using this power, and suffer himself to be delivered into their hands—to be brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he was not to open his mouth. He was in no respect to resist his murderers, but to submit to the infliction of those things which produce death. Had it been the purpose of the Godhead that he should not die, a universe could not have slain him. But it was the decree of God that he should submit to those sufferings which immediately produce death.

According to the doctrine that his sufferings did not produce death, and that the separation of his soul and body was voluntary, the following things are erroneous. It was an error in the prophets to predict that he should be slain. The venerable Isaiah *erred*, when in prophetic vision he wrote, as he was moved by the Holy Ghost, that Christ was

"CUT OFF out of the land of the living." Daniel also *erred*, when under the same guidance he wrote, "After threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be CUT OFF, but not for himself."

The predictions of Christ respecting his own death are, according to this theory, altogether *erroneous*. He said, "The Son of Man shall be delivered unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles, and they shall mock him and shall scourge him, and shall spit upon him, and shall kill him."

Pilate was *needlessly alarmed* at the injustice of putting him to death. When he saw that he could prevail nothing for his deliverance, he took water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this just person. See ye to it."

The Jews *needlessly took the responsibility* of his blood, for all the people answered and said, "His blood be on us and on our children."

The declarations of the apostles, that *he was slain*, are founded *in error*, and their charging the Jews with *having killed* the Prince of life was altogether *slandorous*. It was certainly the universal opinion of the disciples, that Christ was put to death as others are, by crucifixion. And hence Peter said, "Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God ye have taken and by wicked hands have *crucified and slain*." "But ye denied the holy one and the just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you, and killed the Prince of life." Paul also labored under the same mistake; for he said of the Jews, that they both "*killed* the Lord Jesus and their own prophets." But if his sufferings did not produce his death, it is not wonderful that the Jews did not believe the apostles, and that they charged the preachers of this slander with a design "to bring this man's blood upon them." The infliction of divine vengeance on the Jews for killing the Prince of life is *unwarrantable* and *unjust*. Respecting those who said, "This is the heir, come, let us kill him and let us seize on his inheritance, and they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard and *slew* him," it was asked, "When therefore the Lord of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen?" "They say unto him, he will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall



render him the fruits in their seasons." The Jews have been excluded from the land of their fathers, others have occupied it, and if the theory, that they did not kill the Prince of life be true, this exclusion is altogether *unjust*.

The new song of heaven, "Thou art worthy to take the book and to open the seals thereof, for thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood," is founded in *error* and ought to be immediately *corrected*. If the Maryville doctrine be true, the saints in glory will soon cease to sing this song. Indeed, it is amazing, that from the very beginning they were not arrested *in their error* by Him, who was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities. It is amazing, that they were not taught, that "his sufferings did not produce death," and that the separation of his soul and body was a *voluntary* act, if this were really true.

Unitarians do not exactly agree respecting the object of Christ's death. Some of them have doubted, whether it has any relation to the forgiveness of sin. Some suppose, that it was to give effect to his precepts. Others that it was to set an example of meekness, patience and forgiveness. Within the circle of our knowledge no one of them has been so pressed by his theory, as to deny, that his sufferings produced his death, and to maintain that he committed a species of **SUPERNATURAL SUICIDE**. Amidst all their difficulties with the design of his death, no one of them has ventured to do such violence to the Scriptures, to Christianity, to reason and to common sense. After opportunity during several years of acquaintance with them and their writings, we freely say, that although in our judgment their views are peculiarly erroneous, yet we have never read, nor heard of any thing in their works so utterly at variance with the divine record, and so thoroughly subversive of Christianity as this. Nor have we ever heard of an infidel, who admitted the existence of such a person as Jesus Christ, and yet denied, that he was slain by his enemies.

The intrinsic character either literary or theological of these works, does not entitle them to a serious review. It is the relation of their author to the churches as the president of a Theological Seminary, that gives them any importance. Although they are not likely to be read, nor understood by the Christian community, it is to be remembered, that the Theological Questions, whose number is nearly *two thousand* and whose answers in some important cases accom-



pany them, are put into the hands of the students in his Seminary as a guide to divine truth. The Doctor himself says, that "in didactic or Christian theology the class have a subject given to them." . . . . . "They are then directed to read such and such authors: if the subject be a controverted one, they read on both sides." These books are not named in the published Questions; but in an elegant manuscript copy of Questions and Directions preserved by a student, the class were directed to read on the Atonement "Weeks' Dialogues, Hopkins, Dwight, Griffin, Cannon, Seven Conversations, Edwards on God's Last End," &c. We stop not here to inquire what Edwards or Hopkins, or Dwight would say at being found in such theological company, but only to give notice, that the Seven Conversations are a part of the course of study in Maryville, and that if the language of these Questions and Conversations is to be understood in its usual import, the student would, on some of the topics at least, need no other books in obeying the direction to "read on both sides." But with the exception of the language on the atonement we are not convinced, that it is thus used. On this subject he is explicit. He says, the sufferings of Christ did not produce his death, but he died *voluntarily*. He supposes the design of his death was to answer the three purposes just mentioned. And also "in order to have a claim on his Father to send the Spirit to renew the heart." He affirms, that "the whole obedience and sufferings of Christ are connected in the scheme of salvation with his death. So also are all the fruits or blessings, of which he is the author. Hence by an easy figure of speech his death is made to stand for the whole, and much stress is laid on his death throughout the Scriptures."\* **FIGURE OF SPEECH! MUCH STRESS IS LAID ON HIS DEATH THROUGHOUT THE SCRIPTURES!** Is this the way, in which the author accounts for the prominence given in the Scriptures to the *death* of Christ? Is it, because by a **FIGURE OF SPEECH** it stands for several things besides his death? Was it by this accumulation of other things, for which by "*an easy figure of speech*" his death is made to stand? Was it this accumulation, that, upon his crying with a loud voice and giving up the ghost, produced the movement in the elements, by which the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bot-

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\* Seven Conversations, p. 46.

tom, and the earth quaked, and the rocks were rent, and the graves were opened, and many bodies of the saints that slept, arose? If his death *alone* is not pre-eminently important,—if to explain its prominence in the Scriptures, we are obliged to suppose it to be a *figure of speech*,—if to account for the stress laid on it, we are compelled to regard it as *standing* for innumerable other events in the history of man, how utterly unworthy are our conceptions of him, whom all heaven adores? Yet these are the views, which are now taught to those, whom the church is rearing for her service.

Whilst these volumes contain the Theology of Maryville Seminary, there are other and equally remarkable doctrines in the published works of its Directors. Whoever wishes to satisfy himself on this point ought carefully to peruse "**AN ANALYSIS OF THE PRINCIPLES OF THE DIVINE GOVERNMENT.**" From this volume published by the Rev. Abel Pearson, D. D., a Director of the Maryville Seminary, we have made extracts in the preceding parts of this article, by which the question of his orthodoxy can be decided. Nor ought the inquirer to omit an article in the Calvinistic Magazine of Feb. 1831, entitled, "Faith according to Common Sense," in which it is asserted, that man "is regenerated through the truth, applied by the Divine Spirit in the way of moral suasion." And that the Spirit "converts him BY THE NATURAL INFLUENCE OF THE TRUTH," and that "REGENERATION IS THAT MORAL ACT IN WHICH MAN GIVES HIS BELIEF TO THE WORD OF GOD." This article was written by the Rev. Frederick A. Ross, who is also a Director of the Maryville Seminary. In view of these doctrines it is not wonderful, that these gentlemen with the greater part of the Synod, to which they belong, have thought it inexpedient to remain with the General Assembly, and therefore have abandoned it. Such doctrines but poorly harmonize with the Confession of Faith; and those, who hold and inculcate them, can not preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace with those, who hold the truth as it is in Jesus. But whilst it is not wonderful, that these men desired to go out of a church, with which they agreed chiefly in name, it is wonderful, that the body unlawfully claiming to be the General Assembly, which, in our view, is not yet entirely bereaved of orthodox men, has commended to the confidence of the churches an Institution, whose literary character is not above suspicion, and whose theology is so much at variance with

the standards, which they profess to adopt. It is wonderful, that within the last year the Presbyterian branch of the American Education Society has had several beneficiaries in this Seminary and its preparatory school. And it is astonishing, that the fathers and brethren of the East should persevere from year to year in the pious collection of funds for missions in our own country, and confidently place them, where they may be used to sustain those doctrines, which they abhor.

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#### ART. II.—LETTER ON REVIVALS.

MR. EDITOR :—Having long resided in Connecticut, I cannot but think myself well acquainted with the condition of the churches in this state, and measurably with the religious condition of New England. It is manifest to every one old enough to make the observation, that a great change has come among us during the last twenty years on the subject of doctrine, style of preaching, and the means of promoting revivals of religion.

Once it was supposed that the word of God was the great means of sanctifying the world. Its doctrines were faithfully preached and attended by effects which we still remember with delight. Then conversions were numerous, and converts were an honor to religion. The pure gospel itself was exhibited without any of those softenings, by which human wisdom and prudence contrive to change it into another. Ministers believed that divine truth was the only instrument of conversion, but they ascribed its efficacy solely to God. They did not ascribe it, as is now done, altogether to the sinner.

These holy men durst not alter God's word in the least, though they had a due respect for their people and valued their esteem. Yet they feared God more, and they desired not any esteem of man which should be purchased by offending God and ruining the souls for whom he had made them responsible. They knew that the carnal mind being at enmity with God, receiveth not the things that be of God, that they are foolishness and an offence to it. But they

did not think themselves allowed on that account to keep back from men that truth that God had appointed for their salvation.

They preached God's word, and desired no converts but such as should be converted by him through its instrumentality. Their converts were numerous, but they did not reckon them by numbers or suppose men were converted, because, in a moment of excitement, they had professed to have changed their own hearts. Such a profession would have destroyed their hopes of any. They did not begin by telling men that religion had nothing in it, but what might be performed in a moment and with the utmost ease; but taught them that they were wholly dependent on the sovereign grace of God. They did not drive men into a scene of excitement, and tell them that to doubt of their own piety, was criminal and a mark of impenitence, but most solemnly warned them against the danger of self-deception, and exhorted them to self-examination; they were never tired of setting before them the internal evidences of a change of heart, and left them to form their own opinions of their piety. They did not calm the impenitent and the most profligate part of society by telling them, that their sinful volitions were no evidence of any moral depravity within—that such depravity is impossible. They would have shuddered to teach men, that *their acts* indeed are wrong, but that *they themselves* were perfectly free from any moral defilement; they taught the depravity of *man* and the depravity of his *acts* as a necessary consequence. They did not make all religion consist in a purpose to gratify self-love in the most useful manner; there were none who had the shamelessness to preach such a religion, or who, after finding any who had the impudence to make a public profession of such a piety, would have had the audacity to admit them to the church and give their orders to a servile tribe of editors to proclaim it abroad through the land as the work of God. Such was our situation then.

But what is our present condition? Our strength is weakness and our energies paralyzed. Never shall we see the old fashioned revivals when all the people were so still, and God so evidently present, until we go back to the old gospel that proclaims the sovereignty of God, and brings the sinner to the dust. We must put the plough in deeper or we shall never have any thing but a harvest of weeds. We

have great reason to ask for the old paths. But this would be mournfully unpopular. Be it so, we have changed once, and peradventure we may change again. But while it is acknowledged that the revivals alluded to were genuine, it is forgotten in how near connexion they came with the abundant inculcation of the doctrines of grace. This is a matter, while many are afraid of these doctrines as discouraging, and while so seldom they are proclaimed after the daring manner of former times, which I deem it important clearly to exhibit. These are emphatically the sword of the Spirit and the doctrine according to godliness. Nothing moves the sinner so strongly : and in a season of revival let it never be imagined, that the distinctive doctrines of truth will ever hinder the agencies of the Spirit of truth. Other and spurious excitements they might hinder : and is it not desirable that such fanatic delusions should be hindered, and that we should have a criterion so convenient for trying the spirits ? But in a genuine work these doctrines are needed not only for purposes of conviction and alarm, but as tests of character. Is there no danger, when men are roused to the subject of religion, that they will settle on the sand and make shipwreck for eternity ? If the bright display of these doctrines be essential at all times, it must be indispensable in a season of special religious concern. And this has been abundantly proved over all these New England churches, especially by the last generation. Then scarcely a revival was reported without express notice in the recital of means, as a guarantee of its purity, that these doctrines, some or all of them, were the mighty power of God unto salvation. But now if a man hearing of a revival should make inquiry concerning the doctrines preached, to test the nature of the work and the character of its fruits, is there no reason to fear that he would be derided as a *hunter up of heresies* ? Then, at all times and in all places these sentiments were proclaimed ; and no minister trembled for his reputation in urging the doctrines of total depravity, divine sovereignty and special grace, lest any should denominate them *the traditions of the elders*, and should say, *if there were revivals where such instruction prevailed, they come in spite of the doctrines preached*. Let us look at this affair a little through the periodicals ; for it cannot be denied that many of the preachers of those times were able men, or that the achievements of grace and the success of means were remarkable.

The Connecticut Evangelical Magazine began in 1800, under the editorial care of Rev. Messrs. James Cogswell, D. D., Nathan Williams, D. D., John Smalley, Jeremiah Day, Benjamin Trumbull, D. D., Levi Hart, Samuel J. Mills, Isaac Lewis, D. D., Elijah Parsons, Charles Backus, Daniel Ely, Nathan Strong, Nathan Perkins, Zebulon Ely and Abel Flint. It was intended to bestow instruction in the doctrines and duties of religion, and at the same time convey sacred intelligence, particularly on the subject of those wonderful revivals of religion for which New England began to be distinguished. The profits of the work were pledged at the outset, and through the twenty-four years of its continuance sacredly applied, to the amount of many thousand dollars, in aid of the Connecticut Missionary Society. The accounts of revivals are drawn up by the ministers of the places where they appeared, and it is remarkable as before observed, how careful they were in all these communications to honor the doctrines of grace. It will not be possible to do justice to the sentiments of these men touching the matter in hand by quotations, much less to convey any adequate impression of the grandeur and divinity of the scenes they describe. A few extracts however, curtailed to the shortest limits, may serve as a sample.

The Rev. Mr. Backus of Somers, reported a revival which took place in 1797.\* He says "the awakened observed that their hearts rose against the justice and sovereignty of God, but the converted discovered a relish for the doctrines of the Bible, and declared that the truths with which they had been contending were the objects of their present enjoyment."

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\* We have said in another article that the orthodox divines of N. E., have been disposed to make too much use of the decrees of God and too little of the atonement in their preaching. They have inculcated submission rather than faith. Instead of making it their great object to inculcate and direct faith in God's promises, they have rather exhorted men to submit to God's sovereignty in bestowing faith. Faith has been not so much a duty as the subject of another duty, they were not so much required to exercise faith as to be willing that God should bestow it on them, not just as he in his wisdom should see best. We wish the reader to examine the extracts here presented; and mark how much is said of God's sovereignty in bestowing grace, and how little about justification by faith.—Ed.

The Rev. Jonathan Miller of West Britain, (Burlington) describes a work of grace in 1798. He says, "revivals of religion are remarkable seasons of general instruction." Here he specifies a number of gospel sentiments which they are fitted to inculcate, as *the sinner's entire depravity, the sovereignty of God and regeneration by the power of the Holy Ghost*. "A number of those," he adds, whose exercises have been described were formerly opposed to the doctrine of God's decrees and particular election; but are now without any exception convinced of their truth and importance, and of the total depravity of the natural heart.

From Rev. Samuel J. Mills of Torrington, 1798. Speaking of the hopefully converted:—"The great essential difference between their former and present views and feelings has very sensibly affected their own minds, as well as the minds of others; especially in those instances in which they had antecedently distinguished themselves by their opposition to the doctrine of decrees, divine sovereignty, the absolute dependence of the creature on God; and his universal providence and the duty of unconditional submission and disinterested affection."

From Rev. Giles H. Cowles, of New Cambridge—town of Bristol, 1798 and 9. "The peculiar doctrines of the gospel, such as the entire depravity of the natural heart, regeneration by the efficacious influences of the Holy Spirit, justification by faith alone, God's sovereignty and universal government, \* \* \* doctrines which are so crossing to the depraved feelings of the natural heart, and so bitterly opposed by many, appear to be very fully and cordially embraced by those who are hopefully renewed."

From Rev. Peter Starr of Warren, 1798 and 9. "Most of those who have obtained hopes of a saving conversion professedly come into the Calvinistic sentiments of religion. They believe in the sinner's total depravity of heart, divine sovereignty, decrees, election and the special influences of the Spirit of God in regeneration."

From Rev. Rufus Hawley of Northington. "Every person who in the judgment of charity is a subject of the regenerating power of the divine Spirit appears full in the belief of divine sovereignty, decrees, election and all the essential doctrines of the gospel."

From Rev. Alexander Gillet of Torrington, 1798 and 9. "The doctrines made use of in carrying on this work is



another distinguishing feature of it. These are the soul-humbling doctrines of our Saviour, which exalt God and stain all the pride of human glory." Here he proceeds to specify, as others have done, the various doctrines of grace, asserting in conclusion that they had been constantly applied and richly attended with a divine blessing.

From Rev. Jeremiah Hallock, of West Simsbury (Canton) 1800. "What are called the hard things, such as the doctrines of total depravity, of the decrees, election and the like became popular. Those who were once angry when these things were preached, would cease to object, when thoroughly convicted, and rather smite on their breasts."

From Edward D. Griffin of New Hartford, 1800. "Addresses to the passions were avoided and the aim was to come at the conscience. Little terror was preached except what is implied in the doctrines of the entire depravity of the carnal heart, the radical defects of the doings of the unregenerate and the sovereignty of God in the dispensations of his grace. The more clearly these and other kindred doctrines were displayed and understood, the more were convictions promoted. In this work the divine Spirit seems to have borne testimony to the truth of those doctrines which are generally embraced by our churches, and which are often distinguished by the appellation of Calvinism. These doctrines appear to have been the sword of the Spirit by which sinners have been 'pricked in their hearts,' and to have been like as a fire and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces." He says the same is true "in all our towns," by which he gives us to understand, that he refers to 50 or 60, who were all visited graciously about the same time with his own.

The Rev. William F. Miller of Windsor has given full testimony to the doctrinal character of a revival among his people about this time, almost in the words of narrations already quoted.

From Rev. Ammi Robbins of Norfolk, 1800. "It is farther to be remarked that those doctrines, which the world call 'hard sayings,' are the most powerful means in the hands of the blessed Spirit to pull down and destroy Satan's strong-holds in the hearts of sinners." Much more is added to the same purpose.

From Rev. Joseph Washburn of Farmington, '98 and 9. "The great and important object in addressing sinners



was to set the most essential and important truths in a simple and plain manner before the mind, without making any violent assault upon the passions, or attempting to frighten &c. . . . Previous to any permanent relief and hope, they were brought almost without exception to feel that they were wholly evil and perfectly helpless in themselves."

From Rev Joshua Williams of Harwinton, 1798 and 9. "It was apparent that discourses on the absolute sovereignty of divine grace had the greatest effect."

From Rev. Jedediah Bushnell of Otsego County, N. Y. 1801. "Previous to conversion men had been disposed to find much fault with divine sovereignty; but when they have been born again they have joyfully embraced that glorious truth as one of the great sources of their consolation."

From Rev. Samuel Shepherd of Lenox Mass. 1801. "Among the awakened in this town a remarkable uniformity has occurred relative to the doctrines which have been embraced. These are such as are usually termed Calvinistic."

From Rev. Jonathan Belden of Winthrop, Maine. 1799 and 1800. "While under conviction men have felt opposed to the doctrines of divine grace and have been brought to realize the total depravity of the heart." Divine sovereignty is alluded to as a doctrine which proved a remarkable test of moral character.

From Rev. Jacob Catlin of New Marlborough, Mass. 1799. "Under the greatest pressure of conviction we generally discover the most solemn attention to the doctrines of total depravity, election, regeneration, atonement and pardon by the blood of Christ, &c."

From Rev. Timothy M. Cooley of East Granville, Mass. 1801. "Others have felt a happy and joyful submission to God as a sovereign, and were willing to be wholly in the hands of that God, who hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and in most instances had not a thought at the time that what they experienced was regeneration. In many instances a hope was obtained and gradually confirmed by comparing themselves with the word, and finding a degree of that submission and disinterested love, which characterize those who are born again."

The Rev. Jedediah Bushnell in writing from Vermont, under date of 1802, gives the same testimony to our purpose as in his letter from Otsego Co. N. Y. above quoted.

The Rev. Jesse Townsend of Freehold, Green Co. N. Y.

(1802.) gives a narration abundantly to the ends of the present undertaking, but so much like others already quoted, that an extract will be omitted.

From one of the Instructors in Yale College, 1802. "The doctrines of grace appear almost instinctively to be acknowledged by all, without a doubt, as the true doctrines of the gospel—the doctrines according to which they hope to be saved."

From Rev. Ira Hart of Middlebury, 1799 and 1800. "It was common for those under serious impressions to experience much opposition to the doctrines of grace, \* \* \* but they found no solid peace or comfort until those doctrines were made the foundation of their hope."

From Rev. Jesse Edson of Halifax, Vt., 1802. "The subjects of this work were led to see themselves totally depraved, deserving of nothing from God but everlasting misery and entirely dependent on sovereign grace."

Rev. Israel Day of Killingly reported a revival in 1800 and 1801. The document is full of testimony in behalf of the doctrines of divine grace, but so connected with the narration, that it is not convenient to make an extract.

From Rev. Thomas Brockway of Lebanon, 2d. Sec. 1803. "On the score of sovereign grace and the almighty power of the divine Spirit in subduing the sinner, I have much to say."

From Rev. Jesse Townsend of New Durham, N. Y. 1803. "The Church is well united in Calvinistic sentiments and are ready to ascribe the whole reformation and happy change which appears among them to the sovereign grace of God." Much to the purpose of the foregoing quotations may be extracted from an account given by Rev. Gersham C. Lyman of Marlborough, Vt. 1803.

From Rev. Silas Churchill of Lebanon, N. Y. 1803. "I know of none who have obtained hopes in this awakening who have not embraced the Calvinistic system of doctrines."

From Rev. John Waters, New Canaan, N. Y. 1803. "From what has taken place in this society it appears evident to a candid mind that a change of heart effectually removes prejudices against the doctrines of the gospel and corrects speculative errors. Indeed it may be remarked that those who are devoutly engaged in a pious life appear to be the most distinguished in favour of those humiliating doctrines which are so opposed to unregenerate minds."

A revival in 1804 is reported by Rev. John B. Preston of Ruport, Vt. and another in 1805 by Rev. Elijah Lymon, of Brookfield, Vt. which are full in confirmation of extracts already often recited, especially in shewing the new aspect in which regeneration enables us to see the distinguishing doctrines of the gospel.

From Rev. Jeremiah Hollock of Canton, 1805. "The awakened were generally led to view the holy government of God, as sovereign, irresistible and extending to all events. They have found themselves shut up to the faith, and necessarily dependent on sovereign mercy to renew their hearts."

From Rev. Elisha Yale of Johnstown N. York. 1806. "The subjects of the work appear to be fully established in the truth and can without difficulty bow their reason to the most humiliating doctrines of the gospel." Here the doctrines alluded to are particularized and the same for substance asserted as in other extracts.

From Rev. Ebenezer Porter of Washington, 1806 :

"The nature and fruits of this work bear a strong affinity in these respects to the revivals once and again described heretofore in your Magazine. Without any exception its special subjects were calm and not violent in their exercises ; and embraced that system of religious sentiments commonly acknowledged and received in our churches."

The Rev. Joshua Williams of Harminton, in giving an account of the revival of 1807, refers us in every leading particular, especially with regard to the views and feelings of the subjects to what he said of the work in '99, in the first volume of the Magazine.

From Rev. Daniel Smith of Durham, 1807.

"For three years nothing very special appeared except a strong opposition to the doctrines of the gospel. In process of time three weekly conferences were appointed. At these meetings one great object was to illustrate and enforce the doctrines of grace, particularly the holiness and sovereignty of God, the sinner's total depravity and entire dependence, the necessity of the atonement and the electing grace of God.

It is believed that for some reason the publication of the Magazine during the year 1807 was suspended. The Vol. for 1808 contains an account by some anonymous writer of a revival in Hartford. "The subjects of this work," he remarks, "have all manifested a deep sense of the depravity

of the human heart ; they have seen that they were justly condemned, had no excuse, could do nothing to help themselves, were dependent on the sovereign mercy of God, and that, if they were saved, it would be wholly through the merits of the Redeemer applied to them by the Holy Spirit, through the grace of that God who has mercy on whom he will have mercy." In July of this year a letter was published from Judge T. Reeve, giving some account of a revival in Litchfield. It is an admirable document and replete in all that can shed honor upon the doctrines of grace, but cannot be suitably presented in an extract.

From Rev. G. H. Cowles of Bristol, 1809. "The hopeful converts manifested a cordial reconciliation to the perfections and government of God, and to the doctrines of the gospel as understood by those who believe the Calvinistic system."

From Rev. E. T. Woodruff of Coventry, 1809.

"The subjects of the work have been disposed to acquiesce and rejoice in all the distinguishing doctrines of the gospel."

From Rev. Nathan Perkins, of West Hartford, 1809.

"The subjects of this work have just and correct ideas of the great and peculiar doctrines of the gospel."

From Rev. Alvan Hyde of Lee, Mass. 1808.

"The former disputes of the people on what are called the 'hard doctrines,' are in a great measure subsided, their consciences seeming to testify in favor of the truth."

From ——— New Haven, 1809.

"Whatever may have been their opinions of them before, they now fully believed and hailed with a welcome that glorious constellation of truths usually denominated the doctrines of grace. I have not known one truly convicted or hopefully converted, who did not give these doctrines the most full and cordial consent and approbation."

From Rev. P. Hawes of Glastenbury, 1810.

"The doctrines which were preached and which they have received, are such as exalt the glorious God and lay the pride of man in the dust. \* \* \* \* \*. They who once were blind are made to see."

From Rev. Timothy Harris of Greenville, Ohio, 1810.

"The subjects of this revival have uniformly embraced the humble doctrines of grace."

From Rev. Aaron Dutton of Guilford, 1809.

"No second cause can be assigned but the ordinary means of grace; the plain exhibition of divine truth, particularly those doctrines denominated the doctrines of grace. All those who obtained hope appeared to draw all their consolations from the doctrines of the cross."

From Rev. E. Steel of Paris, N. Y., 1810.

"The church have taken great pains to diffuse doctrinal knowledge among the people. \* \* \* The awakened have no contest about the doctrines of depravity, divine sovereignty, decrees, &c. These are all readily admitted, though they own that they are not pleased with them."

From Rev. Chester Wright, Montpelier, Vt.

"There has been a remarkable unanimity of sentiment among the hopeful subjects of this work. They have been born into the doctrines of grace."

The Rev. Timothy Stone of Cornwall, in describing the revival of 1812, has given a sound testimony to the power and excellence of divine truth.

From Rev. H. T. Lincoln of Falmouth, Mass., 1812.

"The exercises of the subjects appeared to be spiritual, in which the deep depravity of the human heart was laid open. When they became established in the doctrines of grace the change appeared so great that beholding spectators were filled with astonishment."

From Rev. Alfred Ely of Monson, Mass., 1813.

"The visible subjects of the work have uniformly expressed a deep conviction of their depraved and helpless condition by nature—of their opposition of heart to the ever blessed God—of their absolute dependence on his sovereign grace. When made submissive, doctrines before offensive were cordially embraced, and became sources of comfort."

From Rev. John Seward of Portage Co., Ohio, (1813) we have a narration corresponding with others in the point now under consideration.

A revival is reported by Rev. Stephen West of Stockbridge, Mass. (1814) well worthy of a place in this catalogue, but from which it is not convenient to make an extract.

The Rev. Increase Graves of Bridgeport, Vt., (1815) has given an account of a revival in terms highly creditable to its doctrinal character, and the Rev. Cornelius C. Cuyler of Poughkeepsie, N. York, (1815) has published another which holds the distinctive doctrines of Calvinistic theology in equal honor and confidence. To drop this periodical I shall take

up the Religious Intelligencer, which commenced in 1816, mainly for the purpose of giving accounts of revivals which began about that time more signally to prevail. This work was published more than 20 years, and had an orthodox beginning. In process of time however, its doctrinal character ran down, and for several years before its conclusion it seemed to be fully on the side of every thing new in doctrine and extravagant in practice which to any extent was admitted among us. It must be allowed that the enterprise of action, the machinery of measures and the temper of the times contributed not a little to abate our concern for doctrinal purity and promote the spread of the new divinity. The old system of things had the decided ascendancy until somewhere between 1821 and 1825, after which our condition became rapidly and materially altered. If the Religious Intelligencer changed in compliance with public opinion, especially in and about the place from which it issued, it nevertheless contributed much to weaken the church and bring in error. It is interesting to notice the timid course of decline, till the year '31, the season in which protracted meetings and the new measures were with few exceptions more or less connected with revivals, when the paper that began in advocating doctrines as essential to a pure revival, came to lay them aside entirely, or, as in many cases, rebuke discrimination, and open on principle the flood-gates of innovation. The editor was quite doubtful in '21 what report should be made of a revival so far as related to the Episcopal and Methodist churches. But soon the kindness of charity, the zeal of reporting numbers or some other cause induced him to publish accessions to these and almost all other denominations without the shadow of an apology. But we do not disapprove of the paper for several of its earlier years, and from this portion I shall now proceed to make quotations, to show as before what were the doctrinal sentiments of former times, with how much uniformity they were considered essential to true religion, and, in the best days of revivals, indispensable to the genuineness and purity of a work of grace.

From Rev. Dr. Sam'l Shepherd of Lenox, Mass. 1816.

"Means though *necessary* to the end; yet they are *not the end*. Not all the terrors of Sinai or of Hell would bring a soul into a state of reconciliation to God without the agency of the Spirit. The doctrines which have been em-

braced by the subjects of this awakening 'with one consent,' are such as the total depravity of the human heart, &c." Here follows a specification full and sound as in other cases.

From Rev. John Woodbridge of Hadley, Mass., 1816.

"The truths which have been particularly blessed and which have been urged to their full extent, without respect to consequences, are those that in these latter years have acquired the distinctive appellation of the doctrines of grace."

From Rev. James Beach of Winstead, 1816.

"I know of none who have been encouraged to hope, that have not been convicted that they were in heart wholly alienated from God, and that free sovereign mercy is their only hope."

From the Editor, 1816.

"The humbling doctrines of grace as they are preached among us are acknowledged of God and mercifully applied by the Spirit to the consciences of sinners."

The Rev. Ashbel Parmelee of Malone, N. Y., (1816) has given an account corresponding with all others of the same period in behalf of the doctrines of grace and the "secret and irresistible agency of the Holy Ghost."

Anonymous, from Salisbury, 1816.

"Number of conversions 300. The work has been exceedingly still and solemn. It is no wonder that persons thus taught by the Spirit should lose all remaining doubts respecting the entire depravity of the natural heart, and should embrace the doctrine of divine sovereignty as a doctrine without which they could have no hope. Hence it is very noticeable that the subjects of the revival, in a great proportion of instances, possessed clear views respecting those great doctrines of grace which are so humbling to the pride of man."

The minister of Harminton remarks, (1816) "Seventy-five persons have already presented themselves to the church, none under 17 years of age, and all of them hoping that they had been effectually *sought out* by sovereign grace."

An account from Waterbury (1816), states that about 100 were already rejoicing in hope, and does honor to that grace which is *distinguishing* and *sovereign*.

The Rev. Coonrod Ten Eyck of Owasco, N. York, reports a great revival in that and the neighboring towns marked with the same features touching the doctrines of grace which have been so often noticed in other places.



The minister in Eastern, N. Y., speaking of a revival there in Chenango Co., (1816) says, "the doctrines which have been held up to view are man's total moral depravity, the duty of immediate repentance," &c. Specification in correspondence with other examples.

The Editor says, "Who can witness such a revival of religion without being convinced that it is the work of the Holy Spirit, and brought to believe in those doctrines of grace which are the Christian's life and hope."

From Rev. Daniel Huntington of Bridgewater, Mass., 1817.

"The doctrines which have been employed by the Spirit in effecting his merciful purposes towards us, are those ordinarily distinguished as the doctrines of grace." Specifications as before.

From Waterbury, 1817. The minister, Mr. Wood, being in feeble health, Mr. Nettleton was obtained to labor in his place. "The doctrines taught are those considered as the grand and leading truths of the gospel." Specifications as in other accounts.

From Rev. Moses Gillet of Rome, N. Y.

"Much opposition arose to the doctrines that were inculcated, more especially to the insufficiency of unregenerate doings, to divine sovereignty and the doctrine of election. Preachers of other denominations advanced other sentiments and strengthened the hands of opposers. \* \* \* In most instances the minds of those who entertained hope, were clear respecting the doctrines of grace."

From Rev. E. Fisk of Goshen, N. Y., 1817.

"It has been the work of God. There has not been much quarreling with particular doctrines. A deep sense of a lost, helpless state by sin, of exposedness to misery, and of the entire insufficiency of means to effect the desired object has generally characterized the distress of conviction. Much has been felt and said of the influence of the Spirit in producing all that is of worth in religious character."

From Rev. Jonathan Core of Bristol, 1817.

"The doctrines preached and blessed to this people are those denominated the doctrines of grace." Details as before.

From Rev. D. S. Butrick of Palmyra, N. Y., 1817.

"Without persuasion or particular instruction from man, respecting them, the new converts were almost unanimous



in receiving as their sweetest food, the gospel, or Calvinistic doctrines so styled."

From Rev. Phineas Cooke of Ackworth, N. Hampshire, 1817.

"The doctrines delivered from the pulpit and discussed in the conference room were those which are well known under the title, doctrines of grace." To these all the converts are represented as cordially subscribing.

Editor, "We have here another proof of the power and efficacy of the humbling doctrines of grace, so repugnant to the natural heart. How dare ministers of the cross of Christ, who are commanded by him to declare the whole counsel of God, keep back these all essential doctrines, so abundantly taught in the Scriptures and which have been the appointed means of all the glorious revivals of religion in our land?"

From Rev. Rufus Cushman of Fair-Haven, Vt.

"At a certain time sectaries came in, set up separate meetings and damaged the work. The doctrines of grace were cried down and declared to be dangerous doctrines by certain teachers, which diverted the attention and created some disputes. But much the greatest proportion here, cordially embraced these doctrines and united with the Congregational Church."

The Rev. R. Hall of N. Ipswich, (1818) has recorded a full and instructive testimony to the truth and power of what he denominates the 'doctrines of the Reformation.'

From Rev. Daniel O. Morton of Shoreham, Vt., 1818.

"The sentiments embraced by this church are what by way of distinction we term 'the doctrines of grace.' 'These are the doctrines which have been inculcated, and blest by the Holy Spirit to the awakening and conversion of sinners and the edification of believers.'"

From Rev. Joshua Williams of Harminton.

"In 28 years 700 were in various revivals added to the church. We have had the age of reason. We now begin the age of Bibles. The power of God in many instances has been strikingly manifested. Clear and distinct discoveries of evangelical truth, such as the total corruption of the heart, the necessity and sovereignty of regenerating grace," &c.

From — Gilmantown, N. H., first published in the Recorder.

A full and interesting account eminently to the present

purpose, and rich in that peculiar honor which a genuine revival of religion should always be expected to shed on the doctrines of grace.

From Rev. Nathaniel Dutton of Champion, N. Y. 1819.

"Many who had long opposed the doctrines of grace now laid aside their opposition and cordially embraced them, acknowledging that if gospel grace were not free and sovereign there could be no hope for such great sinners as they were."

From Rev. Zebedee Kendall of Dunstable, Mass., 1818.

"All the hopeful converts have professed to receive the doctrines of grace as the only foundation of their hopes, and to glory in nothing save the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

From — Goffstown, N Hamp. "All those who have related their experience, appear firmly to believe in the essential doctrines of grace and receive them with full approbation."

From Rev. John Parkhurst, Amherst, Mass. "Much care was taken to guard them against false hopes and false joys. The nature of supreme love to God and unconditional submission to his will was repeatedly explained. Consequently clear evidence of piety, \* \* \* No falling off, &c.

From Rev. Samuel Ware of Ware, Mass., 1819. "The doctrines which have been blest in this and the neighboring towns, to the salvation of so many souls, may be styled the doctrines of the Reformation." Particulars as in other cases.

The Christian Spectator began this year, 1819, and had a race of twenty years. As an evidence of the design of this work and of our doctrinal harmony at that time, it was intended to offer in this place a liberal extract from the preface of the first number. But for the sake of brevity we must content ourselves with a single sentence. "The doctrines inculcated will be those which are termed 'the doctrines of grace,' and which have ever prevailed in the great body of the Congregational and Presbyterian churches." How far this periodical, especially while for the last ten years it was published in a quarterly form, kept the high promise and answered the reasonable expectations of its early beginnings it is unnecessary to describe.

But to return to the Religious Intelligencer. From Rev. Joseph Gaffee of Milbury Mass., '20. The change wrought in the heart by the Spirit of God is instantaneous, yet those who profess a hope \* \* appear for the most part to have been brought gradually to an unconditional surrender, &c.

They have been convinced of the finished depravity of their hearts—of their native enmity against God—of their need of a spiritual renovation—of an infinite atonement and of an Almighty Redeemer to deliver them from wrath."

From Rev. Philander Parmelee of Bolton, 1820. "A catechetical society was founded more than three years before this revival for the purpose of instructing the youth in the doctrines of religion. \* \* \* About 30 of the members of this society are now members of the church. The knowledge they obtained of the doctrines of grace before their conversion to God"—is represented as of great importance for several reasons. From an eye witness:—Byfield, Mass., '20. "The depravity of the human heart, the necessity of renewing grace and practical godliness are the subjects mostly insisted on \* \* \* Revivals of religion, our pastor tells us, are excellent schools for young ministers, and have been of great service to him."

From Rev. Heman Humphrey of Pittsfield, Mass., 1820. "The work seemed to advance as a spirit of prayer prevailed in the church. \* \* \* The subjects of this revival have not been encouraged to make a profession immediately, but rather to wait considerable time, &c. \* \* The subjects of this revival cordially embrace the doctrines of grace as they are exhibited in the Assembly's Catechism and other kindred confessions." In 1821 the Editor seems inclined to attribute an undue efficacy to means and speaks of *stemming the current of successful experiment*, &c. Again he adds: "Revivals appear to be assuming a new character, both in the manner in which they are continued, and in their magnitude. And if Christians only have faith to believe that they need not stop, we have no doubt they would continue from year to year and spread from place to place until the millennial day is ushered in." Comparing this remark with one made by Rev. Reuben Smith of Bolton, some 18 months previous, when he said "we have found the true way for Christians to carry on a revival of religion—that is to lie prostrate in the dust and let God carry it on himself"—and we shall see the defection from the spirit of sound doctrine which was even then beginning to work.

From Messrs. Merwin and Taylor of New Haven, 1821. "Some weeks after the revival had commenced, the Rev. Mr. Nettleton providentially directed, came and spent a number of weeks as an evangelist among us, and his labors

were eminently blessed by the great Lord of the harvest." And who was this Mr. Nettleton? Was he a doctrinal preacher? It has generally been supposed that the revival here in '21, and also that in '15, commenced under his preaching and in both cases not until he had preached a considerable time. But be this as it may, it is strange that he should so soon be considered at New Haven only as a *mischief maker*. No man has been so early and deeply interested in the doctrinal discussions of Connecticut—no man more deplores the reign of new divinity, and it is not known to every body that when he visited New Haven in 1821, it was for the sole purpose of resisting the rising speculations. This fact, if it can be proved, may answer as a sufficient refutation of the calumny that *he once agreed with the new brethren, but since a severe sickness he has lost his mind, is not the man he was, and has changed*. This year, 1821, the General Association made a noble report which for our present purposes ought to be transcribed throughout. They remark that "we have 207 churches. In these, during the past year, about 5000 souls have been hopefully translated from darkness to light." They then proceed to mention several characteristics of the work, among which *unity* is first: Secondly, its *power*: Thirdly, its *purity*: Fourthly, its *continuance*: and Fifthly, its *influence*, "in elevating the character both of ministers and churches."

From Rev. Heman Humphrey of Pittsfield, Mass., 1822. "Many of the leading characteristics of this work of grace correspond so exactly with what is found in other narrations that I deem it quite unnecessary to be particular. The same truths have been eminently blessed, which have so often proved mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds."

From Rev. Caleb J. Tenney of Wethersfield, 1822. "Here in this section of country God has illustriously displayed his own perfections in the work which is emphatically his." He speaks of Mr. Nettleton's labours there with great affection and confidence.

From Rev. Joab Brace of Newington, 1822. The labors of Mr. Nettleton are spoken of as greatly blessed. A sound testimony is given, adopted throughout to commend the purity of the work. "One prominent feature in the converts was a fear of self deception."

From Rev. Elijah Wheeler, Great Borington, Mass.

1822. "The subjects appear to understand and cordially embrace the gospel system of doctrines as held by our church."

From Rev. Joseph Harvey, Goshen, 1822. "A happy testimonial to the genuineness of the work in view of those doctrines of grace which have formed the highest honor and distinction of similar scenes in other places."

From Rev. Wm. Strong of Somers, 1823. "As to the features of this work"—(here several particulars are named and among the rest, "the truths which were blessed,") "there has been nothing to distinguish it from other revivals in which God has shaken a whole people."

From Rev. Abraham Wheeler of Condit, N. Hampshire. "A solemn belief of the doctrines of grace has produced generally in the subjects of the work a thorough conviction of sin and that help is to be found only in the sovereign mercy of God through an Almighty Redeemer."

From W. — of Bozrah. "The kind of preaching attended with the special agency of the Spirit, was the exhibition of the divine law, divine sovereignty, total depravity, the sufficiency and freeness of salvation by Christ, repentance, faith and the danger of being left to hardness of heart."

The accounts from about this period appear of a mixed nature. The precise statement of doctrines inculcated appear not to be deemed so essential, and where they are named we find the distinctive features not brought out so prominently, abridged, or wholly omitted. Revivals had become common—the power of God and the efficacy of divine truth became less prominent—the influence of public opinion suffered the standard of sentiment and measures to subside, and these seasons came more and more to be considered as matters of course and treated after the fashion of secular business.

The excessive labors suddenly thrown upon pastors in times like these, induced many to think that we needed another order of ministers. In Oct. 1823, Mr. Calhoun made a communication about a female society for promoting revivals of religion. The design was to raise funds for the hire of Evangelists. \$84 39 collected, &c.

From Dr. J. C. Brockway, N. Lyme, 1824. "The purely evangelical ministration of the Rev. Mr. Hawes our Pastor, had evidently a powerful influence in preparing the way for this deeply interesting event," a precious revival.

From Monroe, N. Y., Aug., 1824, we find the first intimation of making the anxious promise by way of committal—calling them to rise up in token of requesting prayers—meetings of young converts, &c. Much is said about measures and little or nothing about doctrines. A statement is given of the number added to the Methodists.

The report of a Conference held at Kennebunk, Maine, for that and the neighboring towns is honorable to religion and its Author.

“From Rev. J. R. Wheelock of Norwich, Vt., 1826. “The subjects of this work seem quite anxious to know more of the entire depravity of their own hearts; and to feel more fully that they have not made themselves to differ from others, but that it is God.” To a gospel evidence of piety like this perhaps the following will suggest some aspect of startling opposition.

From Wintonbury, 1826. “The *omnipotence of truth* is felt, and converts are multiplying.”

Some would appear rather violent in asserting their independence and in breaking away from the precision of usage.

From Rev. James D. Farnsworth of Orford, N. Hamp., 1826. “It has been my aim to preach and exhibit divine truth in a plain, faithful and pungent manner, *as it is exhibited in the Bible*. Faith, repentance and holiness have been prominent subjects of the preached word.”

Nov., 1826. The new measures began to produce alarm to some of the more indoctrinated, sober and judicious. But terribly were they denounced by the Western Recorder, whose severe remarks were copied into the Religious Intelligencer. They were called *speculative, opposers of the vigorous and systematic application of means in promoting revivals of religion*. They were caricatured as *taken with drowsiness,—as half dreaming,—as more timid than the evening zephyr—sneered at as prudent, who by long acquaintance with revivals can distinguish the genuine from the false without the labor of investigation. They can judge from means instead of results. They would have men wait God’s time, &c.* Great stress was laid upon immediate repentance in this and the following years, by those who were set on bringing in new things, as the distinguishing peculiarity of modern times and utterly unknown to the fathers. This was the year of the New Lebanon Convention of several

leading divines from the East and West on the new measures. Nothing was decided because the East refused to try the measures on the ground of *results*.

From Rev. Abraham Jackson, of Machias, Maine, (1827) we have a report of a revival which is cheering—much in the sound and Calvinistic strain of former years.

From Bozraville, 1827. "The revival commenced with Bible class instruction." The account adds that revivals of religion in other places have attended or followed the same kind of instruction.

From Rev. Cyrus Mann, of Westminster, Mass., (1827) we have a revival reported in the olden way—with such honorable mention of the doctrines of grace and the power of God as these sheets have rendered quite familiar.

From Lee, Mass., the account is tolerable, but not so discriminating as in former years.

From Beddeford, Mass. The account is full and striking in behalf of the distinguishing doctrines of the gospel.

From Rev. John Shaw, Hartford, N. Y., (1827) we have an account highly creditable to sound views, although we cannot help noticing that even this man and almost all the writers of such documents in these times appear to consider it necessary to add, under the head of things inculcated, "the sinner's immediate duty to repent of sin."

In a letter to Mr. Aikin of Utica, dated Albany, Jan. 13, 1827, Mr. Nettleton says, "Seven years ago about two thousand souls were hopefully born into the kingdom in this vicinity with comparative stillness. But the times have altered. The kingdom of God now cometh with great observation. There is doubtless a work of grace in Troy. Many sinners have hopefully been born into the kingdom; but it has been at an awful expense. Many of our first ministers have visited the place to witness for themselves. Such men as Dr. Griffin, Dr. Porter of Catskill, Dr. Nott, Mr. Tucker, Mr. Cornelius, and many more. After giving credit for preaching much truth, they uniformly say, I never heard the names of God used with such irreverence. Dr. Griffin gave me a number of specimens. I do not wish to retail them. It is just such a contest as I have sometimes seen in its incipient stages in New England, between some revival ministers on the one side and whole associations of ministers on the other. And all those ministers who would not yield the reins and sanction their imprudencies would be



sure to be proclaimed as enemies of revivals." In his review of Mr. Finney's sermon, Mr. N. has taken occasion to add:—"A powerful religious excitement badly conducted has ever been considered by the most experienced ministers and best friends of revivals to be a great calamity." He speaks on erroneous views of the prayer of faith which were abroad in the land—the error of testing measures by their apparent utility—the praying of women in mixed assemblies, &c. . . . . Dr. Beecher's correspondence with Dr. Bee-man on the new measures was about this time. Perhaps the following account of a revival as to means, will be considered sufficiently indefinite.

From Rev. Miles O. Squire of Geneva N. Y. 1828. "The principal means owned and blessed of God in the commencement and progress of the revival here are the preaching of the word and prayer."

Through this year (1828) the conference of neighbouring churches, over a region of limited extent, was the order of the day and highly commended. They were attended with the renewing of the covenant in the church where the meeting was held and the humble confession of the pastor, with mutual pledges for the future and an earnest exhortation to both parties from the numerous delegation which consisted exclusively of laymen. Although some good might have attended these meetings at first, they soon came to exert an influence more or less disorganizing and revolutionary.

Perhaps the following report considering the times may be regarded by some as an ingenious specimen of *noncommittal*.

From Rev. L. E. Lathrop, Salisbury. '28. "The depravity of man—the holiness of God and his law—the evil of sin—the nature and necessity of repentance and of faith in Christ, as the great atoning sacrifice for sin, and the necessity of a holy life—the doctrines immediately connected with these are the principal truths, in view of which persons were convinced of the error of their ways and led to cast themselves at the footstool of sovereign mercy and to choose that good part which can never be taken from them."

The Rev. Daniel Lancaster of Gilmonton, N. H. says, that God has blessed the usual means of grace and has shewn that he can work without means.

The Rev. Martin More of Notick says, that God has shewn his word to be the sword of the Spirit and blest the

reading and study of the scriptures. During the latter part of this year, 1828, we find the first distinct announcement of Four Days' Meetings. From this time the evidences of our decline are more distinct and terrible. Take the following for example: From Rev. S. S. Mallory 1830. "At the close of meeting twelve or thirteen were seen in a kneeling posture to be prayed for, and their tears and cries for mercy were enough to move the most unfeeling heart."

Another specimen: From Rev. A. Ross of Bristol, R. I. "After meeting was closed and the assembly were about to disperse, 8 or 10 young ladies began to be in the deepest anguish, and the cry was heard throughout the house 'Lord save or I perish.' Last evening at the close of divine service liberty was given for *mourners* to come to the altar for prayers, when about 20 young ladies and a number of males, came forward." This was the practice with little variation for some years, at least while protracted meetings continued among the Congregational, the Baptist and Methodist denominations.

The following may also be quoted without comment as a sample of the times and to mark the falling off.

From Rev. S. H.—Orwell, Vt. "The means which God has most signally blessed in carrying forward this good work are agonizing prayer, and a plain exhibition of divine truth, in which the sinner was taught the character and law of God; his own character; the importance of his immediate submission to the Lord Jesus Christ as the only Saviour; his ability to submit now; his increase of guilt, let him do what he would, until he did surrender his all into the hands of sovereign mercy, to be disposed of according to his righteous pleasure, and that he every moment was exposed to infinite vengeance until he did repent."

Sample again. Great Borrrington Mass. 1831. "You may judge what our feelings were, when more than 70 presented themselves in the anxious room. Before the Four Days' Meeting I do not know that there was an anxious soul in the town; and but very few of the church were awake. This truly is the work of the Lord. I hope the church begins to get into the dust—truly there is no need of it."

The contrivance of getting up a revival, which some appeared to understand so well, and the right of bitter denunciation for the sake of saving souls, must now have place. Ap. 1831. It is said that a brother from N. Haven when

asked about the state of the revival in that place, replied, 'O it is all over, for the brethren begin to make long prayers.' Then the Editor goes on to remark: 'We have seen the best devotional feelings of a whole assembly convened for prayer, disturbed and almost destroyed by a long *preachment* on the nature of prayer and other Christian duties. At this precious season it is distressing to hear long, cold and desultory prayers. If called upon to pray, a man should supplicate for the thing he wants fervently and importunately and then stop. At such meetings there should be 3 or 4 prayers offered successively, while the suppliants are on their knees, and there should be little exhortation or singing.'

Editorial again. August, 1831. "There appears to be nothing wanting but faith enough to try the experiment, as Naaman did, to have a revival. Go call your Christian friends and a few faithful ministers together, and hold a Four Days' Meeting, and you may have a revival." I shall close these painful evidences of declension by the following extract from Rev. H. P. Arms, of Hebron, 1831.

"As a principal means of promoting this good work may be mentioned *prayer; persevering, agonizing prayer*. A prominent point in the instruction given, both in public and in private had been, the necessity and **PRACTICABILITY** of *immediate repentance*. These means God has blessed. To him be all the praise."

From this period of protracted meetings which, assumed the title of *series of meetings, extra efforts, special efforts &c.* the proclivities of our decline were precipitous and little can be gleaned from the paper in hand till its close, to the purpose of disproving a radical change in principle and practice.

The new measures, to be sure, did not rise in the same region with the new divinity; but they were of a kindred nature, and when they came in contact they united and mutually aided one another.

"Faults in the life breed errors in the brain,  
And these reciprocally those again."

Be it so that the new measures have come into Conn. and New England, comparatively, but little; yet the theory is among us of Arminian fanaticism and needs only corresponding circumstances to bring it out. It cannot be denied that the character of our revivals has greatly degenerated from

the cast of those in former times ; when we hear so much of the fear of self-deception in the awakened, of stillness and solemnity, the retiring spirit of prayer, the delay of weeks and months before the hopefully converted were admitted to the church ; when converts were spoken of with an air of reserve so suitable to the acknowledged treachery of the human heart ; when the heaven-descended purity of the work quelled the tumult of opposition, put down the popular vices, strengthened the church and society and gave tokens of fruit in such humble and uniform piety ; when ministers were treated with so much respect by the people and were so united among themselves. Nothing can be done to promote the triumphs of the gospel and the salvation of men except faithfully to preach the truth. God has promised to bless nothing else. But those who give themselves up in this way to the service of the word seem not to be up to the spirit of the times. Some admixture of human device is requisite for purposes of expedition, and while men are to be reasoned into every thing else, the sickly taste of the times appears to demand some other expedient, of the nature of artifice, to bring them into religion. The arguments relied on to justify these devices are specious and attractive to the common people and are equally availing in behalf of the new divinity. Expediency is the rule ; and the Bible must occupy a secondary place. The people have been led to make a violent divorce between doctrinal and practical preaching, not considering the one consistent with the other ; and in vain dependence on the spear alone, have been inclined wholly to dispense with the shield. Thus our tendency for a long time has been to a superficial and undefined religion ; and its influence on the world at large has been to confirm the worldling in his indifference, and the skeptic in his infidelity. To men of sense practice is always an inference from some doctrine. Doctrine is the first thing for which all scripture is said by God to be profitable. And if it be possible to preach doctrines so dryly, that men will not strongly feel their practical influence ; on the other hand, to tell a man 'do be good' all the days of his life, will never make him good without those doctrines, which shew him what goodness is and the motives for its adoption. The knowledge which men obtain before their conversion, is worth as much to any man as the same amount obtained afterwards. Where the doctrines are thoroughly inculcated, the good seed, when the Spirit is

poured out, will spring up readily. There men will be discriminating and solemn,—there the benign influence of the gospel will every way prevail and few will be the subjects of apostacy and backsliding. But where the people are ignorant, and ready, under a general excitement, to take every erroneous direction, a revival of religion, especially under bad management at the time, may result in damage inconceivable, without imputing any evil to the spirit by which the people are moved.

It must be acknowledged that our evils had a beginning quite natural. When revivals of religion became common, it was easy to remit our concern for doctrinal purity in the animating enterprize of in-gathering. The change was gradual, but soon revivals assumed the cast of secular news. An impression grew up, that they were to be managed according to exigences like other kinds of business. Means assumed an inordinate agency; the Bible was neglected and the influence of the Spirit forgotten. Men thought that nothing was done to promote religion unless they were reaping all the year; a spirit of bitter denunciation broke out among Christians, as well as a sharp and scolding way of addressing sinners; and ministers were estimated and treated according to a reckless feeling of most uncharitable and invidious distinction. Men thought they saw the necessary connexion between means and ends, and in this peculiarity the only reason why they had not enjoyed revivals before, as well as the source from which they might be manufactured to order in all coming time. This change in regard to revivals kept pace with our doctrinal delinquency, the one helping the other, until the efficiency of moral suasion came to be extensively adopted: surprising views were entertained concerning the prayer of faith, and in the place of the Spirit's power, a blind and discouraging sentiment of olden times. *Truth* was made to assume an omnipotent agency; and man committed to the mercy of *his own desperate efforts, the voluntary suspension of his own selfishness*, to become a Christian without any concern about doctrines or duties except so far as to *change his governing purpose, adopt a new resolution, and put himself to the work of serving God*. No wonder that a scheme so divested of every thing peculiar to the Christian plan, conceived with skill enough to render it plausible, should receive, especially under such circumstances, great favor and a rapid extension. To many

minds it is with pain unutterable that we are compelled in so short a time to submit to a change like this. The contrast is overwhelming. Truly while men slept, an enemy hath sown tares; and where to the evil will grow it is impossible to predict. Strange that so soon we should have the same evils to encounter which President Edwards spent his whole life in resisting, and over which he and his followers have once been so signally triumphant. To whom is the change and the strife to be attributed? A tremendous responsibility has been incurred. Will it be pretended that the blame belongs to those who have been alarmed for the preservation of those doctrines on which they ground their hopes of heaven, whose truth they have tested not only in revivals of religion, but their own experience as Christians, and which they continue to preach as they always have done? Yes, these are the men upon whom the utmost effort has been made to fasten the odium of all the change and all the dissension. We hear it said by grave divines that our differences after all are only *verbal*: that if we could understand one another, our varieties would be found only *shades of the same thing*, and that even now *we are as much united as we have been for the last forty years*.

There are no words with which sentiments like these, especially from persons of character and professed piety, may be suitably deplored; for it is confidently to be presumed that no person of candor and intelligence, acquainted with the facts and circumstances attending the subject, can entertain, in behalf of such declarations any honorable opinion. This is a topic too painful to dwell upon, and here we find the deepest cut of all. That we were once united beyond all other example of ministers and churches over the same extent of population is abundantly evident in the quotations which have already been given from reported accounts of revivals. The ample announcements, which these extracts present of the doctrines inculcated, are free, cordial and uniform, an accredited testimony to the genuineness of the work and its utility in promoting that religion, which was the common bond of the denomination, and basis of all our fellowship and harmony. Men openly proclaimed their doctrinal views with a frankness and sincerity that showed them not to be afraid of one another. There was no disagreement, no discrepancy of views which caused the smallest jar in all our borders. The Arminian sects rejected the doctrinal peculiarities of our denomination,

as they claimed, on principle, with more or less aversion ; though the more pious and candid always agreed with us in almost every thing when we spoke in chosen symbols, and avoided those Calvinistic terms against which they had imbibed an unhappy prejudice. But infidels, worldlings and skeptics of every sort have ever held these doctrines in perfect hostility. Little did we think that so soon we should be called upon to defend the hard doctrines of our creed against the exceptions of any considerable class in the ranks of our own ministry and members. But do our new divinity brethren say they agree with us ? Then whence has originated the strife ? And who have taken pains to establish a difference if they have not ? Besides, if the difference in their view amounts to nothing material, the prosecution of the debate, when they see how unpleasant their views are to others and how much evil is likely to result from the controversy, must be from a mere wantonness of disposition, only for the sake of strife and contention. A man has a perfect right to adopt new views on the subject of gospel theology as well as any other, but he has no right to procure himself a place under hire as a teacher of religion in a particular denomination, when he knows that he holds and is about to teach sentiments subversive of the well ascertained creed of the sect which he promises to serve and not destroy. Again, if a minister, after settlement, should change his views on any important subject, he is acting on the ground of a personal right. His responsibility to God is so great, that to blame him for such a change would be like blaming him for testimony given under oath in a court of justice without the power of impeachment. But if there be no reason in all this why he should be blamed, there is an ample reason why he should be removed, and why, if a good man, he might himself desire to leave. But how does our condition now compare with what it once was ? We have revivals of religion now as well as formerly. But they are to a great extent discredited, and commonly furnish no pledge of doctrinal purity. They seem prevalingly too much like the work of man ; they have lost the public confidence and appear to be quite another sort of movement from what they once were. The gospel shorn of its divinity produces corresponding revivals. The friends of genuine religion mourn in secret places, and infidelity triumphs. If unbelievers are less violent in their opposition, it is because they are less



oppressed by the doctrines and uncompromising claims of the gospel. The opposition of men to the truth is turned into personal dislike towards certain preachers, who are reputed to hold peculiar sentiments, unsocial and absurd, and whom there has been the utmost effort on the part of ministers and church-members to load with discredit. Is there no evidence that our revivals for the most part have become superficial, a thing of blind excitement, and may not soon to a fearful extent be discountenanced by sober men and laid aside entirely, if they do not prove the utter overthrow of religion itself? They give us no report such as the foregoing extracts furnish of the opposition of men to the doctrines of grace, as the mark of a genuine work; of the conversion of men to the love of those truths which once they hated, or the effects of such doctrines any way. And why? what is the reason except, that these doctrines are not urged, or if otherwise, that they are received with so much abatement as utterly to fail of the influence which once they exerted of bringing down high looks and breaking the heart in pieces? Alas, "when the foundations fail what shall the righteous do?" And what avails it if our new divinity brethren should say, even without any intention of insulting our feelings, 'go to work, preach the doctrines, promote revivals and do good as you have done and welcome; we will not hinder you, and you would be much better employed than in contending with us.' But the time for such a service of God and the church is past. The appeal may seem plausible to many, but really it is like the demand of brick to the full measure without furnishing straw. They should not reproach us with contention when they disagreed with us before we disagreed with them, and when they have continued the strife to the subverting, as we have supposed, of all that is genuine in religious experience, without any claim on their part of suggesting an improvement essential to salvation. But so it is, in any such controversy, the innocent must bear in a great measure, if not altogether, the burden of the ill-deserving. The ministry having contended, whatever be the reason, the people were all alike broken away from our influence, and no man of the profession can do as once he could. Hardly any thing destroys religion and its influence like ministerial dissensions, and therefore they should be avoided as far as possible. If the ministry contend about *three* points, it will be natural to expect that the people will renounce their opinions and set up for themselves in regard to *ten*.

It is always hard contending with the human heart, and enforcing the doctrines of that gospel which is every where spoken against. But with us the truth is loaded with a burden not its own. For when men hear the trying and uncomfortable doctrines they refer the inconvenience of their feelings to the circumstance that they belong to another school of religious doctrine, which is honored by respectable names, rather than any hostility of heart to God and his gospel. Thus the influence of truth is cashiered by being 'left to fight for definitions,' or considered as occupying a debatable territory. If men have a plausible pretext for evading it we know how apt they are to improve it to their everlasting ruin.

It is said that the new divinity has had a rapid spread, and it is said with truth. But is this any evidence of its gospel soundness? The avowed object of its advocates is to render the doctrines plainer to men of taste and sense; to take away the discouraging features, the inconsistencies and absurdities of the old fashioned system. Yes, and every sinner has got the idea that it is an easier way to heaven. But is this any evidence of its truth? Will it not be well to preach the preaching that God has bidden us, rather than that which man's wisdom teaches, and take heed in our philosophic speculations that we do not overlook the Bible, that we do not remove the offence of the cross, and that we weigh well the value of the wheat when compared with the chaff? But our condition is deplorable, it calls upon all who love the doctrines of the gospel in their purity, to consider what course the times demand, and with promptness and patience pursue it. If the ark of true religion be not in danger, then many of the wisest and best men in the land have lost that honesty and perception for which they have hitherto been distinguished. But the subject is altogether too serious for the indulgence of a spirit of hostility and crimination. Those who have done wrong concerning an interest so sacred, stand or fall to their own Master, and have assumed a responsibility that better entitles them to pity than resentment. But what shall become of these institutions of our fathers; what shall become of us and our children! Blessed be God, the cause is his, and in him we may hope and confide unto the end. A CONNECTICUT PASTOR.

ERRATA.—On page 470, 20th line from the top it should read "they left them to form their own opinions of their piety," instead of "they never left," &c. Also, on p. 472, 5th line from bottom, it should read, "as to be willing that God should bestow it on them *or not*, just as he in his wisdom should see best."

## ART. III.—ORIGIN OF FALSE NOTIONS RESPECTING GOD.

By Rev. Richard W. Dickinson, New York.

THAT diversity which is found among the human species, resulting from the varying influences of climate, education and pursuit, on their modes of thought and feeling, might lead an inquirer to anticipate some diversity in their theistical views. But it will be perceived on research, that the being of a God is hardly more extensively admitted, than his nature and attributes are variously regarded by his rational creatures. There is no light in which the Supreme Being can be viewed, whether it be honorable to his name or degrading to his perfections, in which he is not acknowledged and worshipped by some members of the human race. From every corner of the earth, man may look out upon the heavens and bow down before the Great Invisible; but their views of him are as various, if not fantastic, as the colors which in endless and indescribable combinations light and shade the firmament.

Among the erroneous notions which have been entertained of God, to our mind it appears the most remarkable that man should have thought God altogether such an one as himself. *Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself*, said God to the ancient Israelites by the lips of their poet king; and if, notwithstanding their religious advantages such an opinion prevailed to any extent among that favored nation, much more may we expect to discover the same sentiment among the several nations of the heathen world. Accordingly, the farther our researches extend, the more minute and various are the obtruding evidences that man is apt to think God like unto himself. The notion is discovered no less really in the refined speculations of philosophic Greece, than obviously in the degrading superstitions of barbaric hordes. If the savage never had a conception of any God but what was corporeal, the greatest of heathen philosophers, alike with the pundits of India, regarded God as the soul of the world. If the most benighted of our race believed their gods to be of the human form, though of a nature more excellent than man; the most improved by mere civili-

zation have never believed in a God as a self-subsisting Reality, entirely independent of matter. "For though God to them, were principally and originally that eternal, unmade soul and mind, which diffuseth itself through all things; yet did they conceive, that as the soul and body both together, made up one whole rational animal, or man; so this mundane soul, and its body the world, did in like manner, both together, make up one entire Divine animal or God."\*

But without stopping to show the connexion between the theistical speculations of the Greek and Roman philosophers and their views of their own conformation, there is sufficient evidence of our position, in the fact, that there was no ancient nation among whom were not to be found corporeal images of their gods. From the colossal statues which stood enshrined amid the magnificence of their temples, to the diminutive idols which protected their hearths, there was a greater or less resemblance to the human form. *'They changed the image of the incorruptible God into an image made like unto corruptible man.* Paul expostulated with the Athenians and Areopagites, to this very end, *that they ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold or silver or stone, graven by art or man's device.*

It has sometimes occurred to us that the great perfection to which the arts of painting and sculpture were brought, was owing to the religious sentiment heightened by the popular demand for sensible representations of the divinities. Had these arts been previously and universally known, perhaps no nation for want of a sensible object of worship had deified plants and animals, much less unorganized, shapeless matter.

Amid the lofty representations of their *Optimus Maximus*, alike with their descriptions of any local deity, may be traced the shadeings of human thought and feeling. Originating in the wants, fears and passions of the savage breast, theology came rude and unpolished into the hands of Greece and Rome; but their elegant mythology is the creation of the human genius refined by culture, and adorned by the graces of poetry. Man for its model, the human mind gave existence, shape, qualities and actions to the gods. Hence, the resemblance which obtained between the systems of superstition established in whatever part of the earth;—

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\* Cudworth's Intellectual System. Vol. I., p. 704.

an uniformity of features so striking, that Grecian travellers and Roman conquerors, however different the titles by which the strange gods were denominated, found their own gods every where. The genealogy of the gods ; their arrangement through the different parts of nature ; their attributes and adventures show but too plainly whence their original was drawn. Under names, respectively vernacular, such as Saturn and Ops, Jupiter and Apis, Cotis and Bendis, Odin and Hertha, the several nations of antiquity worshipped a *father and mother* of the gods. Though regarded by Homer as the father of gods and men, Jupiter in reality was an upstart, parricide and usurper. The god of war was represented as cruel and furious ; the god of poetry as bland, polite and elegant ; the god of merchandize as deceitful, and thievish. These few examples will suffice to show that the heathen differed in little from their gods excepting in relative position. They were the embodied conceptions of their darkened understandings exalted to the skies, and there invested with Olympian splendors. The greater number of heathen divinities were supposed to have once been men, and to have been apotheosized by the admiration or gratitude of the people among whom their exploits were performed or their benefits conferred.

Unlike true religion, which, by presenting for man's imitation a perfect standard of excellence aims to mould the human mind after a divine model ; superstition, by ascribing to the beings whom it has deified only such qualities and actions as the mind naturally admires and celebrates, has drawn its image of perfection and glory from the imperfections and shame of man—proposing as the object of his worship and the copy for his imitation—his own depraved self, veiled in splendor, though not changed by either the elevation of his place, or the sacredness of his name.

It is often a matter of surprise that any people could suppose their Gods capable of perpetrating actions and indulging passions which cannot be contemplated by our minds without horror or disgust ; but a philosophic investigation, discloses in the spirit and character of the times, the secret of this remarkable fact. Neither the labors of Hercules, nor the achievements of Vishnou could have been necessary but in times of anarchy and violence ; nor could they have been deemed meritorious in any other than an age of the wildest turbulence and rapine. So, neither would the impieties

of Aristophanes have been acted and applauded at Athens; nor the representations of Jupiter in the Amphictrion been enjoined in times of calamity by Roman authority, had not *these* been the true lights in which a licentious people delighted to conceive their divinities. Hence, the adventures and exploits of any false deity, have furnished historians with a criterion of the state of society and manners, when his authority was first acknowledged.

Examine the theistical opinions of any ancient people, and it will be found, that to a greater or less extent, they transferred the views and feelings which characterized them as barbarous or civilized—as the inhabitants of cold or milder regions, to the beings whom they recognized as presiding divinities. Nor will it be difficult to detect the evidence of the same erroneous standard of judgement among Christian nations. Who can have failed to observe, to how great an extent the impressions which a Romanist entertains of God have been modified by his faith in the prerogatives of the Pope? The style of address which was once so common among the adherents of the Romish communion (e. g. Our Lord God the Pope!) would go far to prove that with some he might have been regarded with sentiments of more than ecclesiastical deference—that they had no conception of the true God separate from the character and authority of “His Holiness.”

Among Protestants the idea of God has been mortified by the dogmas of schools and the tenets of sects. On the one hand, all the attributes of the Supreme Being are resolved into the attribute of Infinite Power; on the other, into the attribute of Infinite Justice; or of Infinite Mercy. With some, He is an arbitrary Sovereign, creating the sins of his creatures, and punishing them with eternal misery; with others, He is virtually finite in his perfections and limited in his power. With one class, He is an Universal Father; with another, a capricious and partial tyrant. How vague are the ideas of many, when they attempt to think of God beyond the limits of their own narrow pale. God, the Infinite Spirit, the Universal Energy, the Stupendous Intelligence, by a legitimate inference from their views, is the God of *their* place, *their* party, *their* passions!

A similar diversity of view respecting God, is observable in individuals. Though both may regard themselves believers in God's Revelation, a man of naturally amiable dispo-

sitions differs in his theistical views from one of naturally a reverse temper :—So one of stern native integrity, from a dishonest man ; or a virtuous from a vicious man.

He who is swayed in the government of his children by feelings of reckless indulgence, is apt to think that God will be similarly indulgent towards his disobedient creatures. He who is indifferent to the public weal, is apt to regard God as a passive spectator of his creation. He who "rolls sin as a sweet morsel under his tongue," fondly imagines that it cannot be a matter of so great abhorrence even to God. He who is naturally placable, sees no necessity for an Atonement for sin ; and because he himself is incapable of comprehending all the thoughts and feelings of other minds, or of recollecting his own acts, another is not backward to doubt the physical possibility of God's arraiguing a world in judgement. In like manner, is it, that man's mental habits or dispositions influence his notions of a state of being beyond the grave. If serious and reflective, the probability of a spiritual futurity, is certainty to his mind, compared with the views of the imbruted sensualist. Hence, it was a custom of Socrates, when any one asked him a question in ethics seeking to be informed of him, before he would answer, to inquire concerning their qualities and course of life.

Now, how is it to be accounted for that man should think God such an one as himself ? It is explicable, we apprehend, on a principle so general in its operation, that it can hardly have escaped the notice of any one, however unaccustomed to reflection. The human mind, through the influence of self-love, naturally constitutes itself the standard of all its relative judgements. In familiar illustration, let it be considered, that we have no notion of beauty separate from our own complexion ; but in Africa, the standard of beauty, is the ebony hue.\* The American Indians discover the perfection of beauty in a face, which to our view, is rendered ludicrous or hideous by the coarsest painting. The defor-

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\* "The color of Denman and Clapperton was considered by the Africans as a deep leprous deformity. . . . The Eyecoo represented for the amusement of the people in the presence of Clapperton, a *white* devil, a meagre, shivering figure, so painted to represent an European." *Adventures in Africa*, pp. 172, 176. Harpers' Edition.



mity which appears to us, so shocking in the foot of the Chinese lady, is seen by her, and associated, too, with the deepest disgrace, in those females who retain the natural shape of the foot. Thus could examples be multiplied until the testimony of the very brutes,—so significantly couched in the fable of the Lion, might be adduced in favor of our position.

We form our ideas of other minds and hearts from our own. Let a man be suspicious, dishonest or malevolent in disposition, and he naturally regards others as not dissimilar from himself. We wonder how others can enjoy that, which is not palatable to us; why others allow that which we condemn; why others believe that which we unhesitatingly reject. All the contempt of the high for the low; all the rancor of parties and sects; all the animosity of nations; many errors in theories and not a few in history may be traced to this principle. "For, in every stage of society, the faculties, the sentiments, and desires of men, are so accommodated to their own state, that they become standards of excellence to themselves; they affix the idea of perfection and happiness to those attainments which resemble their own; and, wherever the objects and enjoyments to which they have been accustomed are wanting, confidently pronounce a people to be barbarous and miserable. It has seldom been the lot of communities, to fall under the observation of persons endowed with force of mind superior to vulgar prejudices and capable of contemplating man, under whatever aspect he appears, with a candid and discerning eye."\*

To illustrate this principle of human nature in a different relation, consider the influence of self-interested opinions in biasing the judgement. Let a person become imbued with the spirit of Masonry, and to his view Solomon himself was a Mason. Let one be interested in the success of a political candidate, and however unworthy the office in the judgement of discerning and dispassionate minds, yet to the eye of partiality, he embodies all the elements of greatness and goodness, which were ever exemplified by any immortal name. With a mind absorbed in but one idea, let another go back and ponder the records of some ancient people, and if he have not unconsciously transferred to them his own belief and customs, he has readily discovered something in their

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\* Robertson's *America*, p. 91, Edinburgh Edition. 1834.

opinions and rites which resemble the tenets of his own creed and the forms of his own worship. Hence, some of the early missionaries to this Continent were induced to believe, that even among the most barbarous hordes they had discovered traces, no less distinct than amusing, of their acquaintance with the sublime mysteries and peculiar institutions of Christianity.\* Hence, in an edition of Homer, which was published during the dark ages, a train of Benedictine Monks is seen in procession at the funeral of Hector.† Let a man, says Locke, “be given up to the contemplation of one sort of knowledge, and that will become every thing. The mind will take such a tincture from familiarity with that object, that every thing else, how remote soever, will be brought under the same view. A metaphysician will bring ploughing and gardening immediately to abstract notions: the history of nature shall signify nothing to him. An alchemist, on the contrary, shall reduce divinity to the maxims of a laboratory.”‡ So Descartes, on perusing the Tragedy of Lear, was disappointed; “for what, said he, does it prove?”

How obvious is it, then, that there is a natural tendency in the human mind to conceive all beings like itself; and to transfer to every object those qualities with which it is familiarly acquainted; or of which it is immediately conscious. The eye may discover faces in the moon—armies in the clouds; and if the impulsive feelings of human nature be not corrected by experience and reflection, how seldom do we refrain from ascribing goodwill or malice to even the *thing* by which we have been pleased or injured. Hence, the frequency and beauty of the *Prosopopœia*, as employed by writers of genius. We can seldom walk abroad through the varied scenes of nature, or gaze on the spangled effulgence of the midnight heavens; or muse in the sheen of moonlight without perceiving,

“How the mind, effused  
Out of itself, communicates the hue  
Of its own subtile spirit, to the forms

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\* Robertson’s America, p. 121.

† Over the altar table, in St. Margaret’s Church, London, is a fine basso relievo, representing our Saviour and the disciples at Emmaus. One of the disciples is dressed like a friar and over his shoulders hangs a cardinal’s hat! and behind the other disciple stands a page in Italian costume with hat and feathers!

‡ Locke’s Conduct of the Understanding. Sect. XIX.

Of outward things; and makes the woods and streams  
Respond to its discourse, and character  
Their feature by its passion."\*

Philosophy itself, is not exempt in this respect, from the influence of imagination. How frequently has she ascribed to Nature, both sympathies and antipathies, with other affections of the human mind; like the man of whom Aristotle speaks, who saw still his own face, as in a glass, wherever he went and on whatever he looked.

Should we be surprised, then, that a disposition so generally operative in the mind, has influenced its conceptions of the Supreme Being?

Considering this tendency of human nature, it might be expected, that after man had lost the knowledge of the true God, and had been given up to his own imaginings, he would naturally conceive of God, as having had a beginning; as having been produced of fleshly parents; as being invested with a corporeal form; that he would fancy a difference of sex among the higher powers, and impute to them the human defects of ignorance, want and fear, if not of sensuality;—that a mythology of his own creation would embody not only accounts of their sublunary feats, but anecdotes of their intrigues, squabbles, choler, thefts, drunkenness and bloodshed;—yea, that despite his opportunities of enlarged and correct views of the Godhead, his not unfrequent representations of the Divine character, would be but a reflection of his own grovelling views and depraved affections. "Thus do we" said Cudworth,† "that are children of the night, make black and ugly representations of God unto ourselves, as the Ethiopians were wont to do, copying him out according to our own likeness and setting up that to ourselves for a god, which we love most dearly in ourselves, that is, our lusts."

In addition to this feature in human nature, which we have attempted to illustrate, let us advert, in further explanation of the fact asserted by Holy Writ, and corroborated by the history of theistical opinions, *to the mental difficulty of forming any adequate conception of a Simple, Infinite Spirit. A Spirit?* If we attempt to define or describe it, it can only be by a series of negations; or should we employ positive terms, they have conveyed to our minds no idea

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\* Elton's Poems.

† Sermon preached before the House of Commons, 1647.

beyond or above etherealized matter. We cannot conceive of finite spirits, (the angels,) even as existences of a spiritual world without involuntarily investing them with bright and airy material forms, surrounded too, by material though resplendently refined scenes. Milton, with all his sublime powers of conception, has as far as *language* is concerned, rendered heaven a material world, and all its inhabitants, from the Great God himself, to the lowest of his worshippers, material beings. His seraphs with his devils, are material conceptions. Nor do his own angels differ from the man whose abode they visited on errands of mercy, except in the wings with which they were furnished. Is the language which the poet employs philosophically reprehensible? Say, rather, his conceptions themselves;—as is our language, so are our thoughts.

In the fancied superiority of our knowledge, how often have we been amused at the remarks of children respecting that God whose being and perfections we have aimed to impress on their belief—all their remarks having been suggested by the most familiar objects. But though our philosophy may correct their erroneous notions, it cannot divest our most elevated conceptions of material imagery—all the conceptions of the human mind, being necessarily shaded by the body which it tenants, and the scenes with which, from the dawn of its mundane existence, it has been exclusively conversant. Hence, in order to be intelligible, there was need that God himself should employ anthropomorphic forms of expression in the revelation of his will to man. Perhaps, from ignorance of this necessity, the very language of inspiration, has led some to form erroneous notions of the Infinite Spirit.

As, therefore, we can form no adequate conception of a Simple, Infinite Spirit, it will be perceived, what room there is afforded for the human mind to shape the Divinity according to its prevailing disposition, or fancy of the moment. Hence, from his not being subjected to the evidence of our senses, some have denied God's existence; others, that he could not exist in Trinity; others again, that God is the world itself; or with the Brahmins and the Stoics, because they cannot comprehend, how a being could act in a place where it was not present, they have supposed God to be a vivifying principle diffused through the whole creation, animating each part of it as an universal soul.

In further explanation of the fact, it might be resolved into an expedient of the depraved heart to quiet conscience. If we can make God altogether such an one as ourselves we need not deprecate his wrath. To him whose moral perceptions have been blinded by selfish interests, or sensual gratifications, God's power is limited; his justice is lenient; his holiness is tolerant, at least of minor offences. He cannot heed our opinions. He does not see or will not strictly regard our actions. The reason that worldly minds not unfrequently persuade themselves of their love to God, and are so inclined to resent any intimation to the contrary, is, we conceive, that they have unconsciously substituted for the true God nothing but an image of themselves, from which, of course, they are far from being averse.

But however the fact may be explained, the absurdity of making ourself the standard in judging of God, may be readily evinced. As man is created, dependent, finite and imperfect, he can in his best estate but faintly image to our minds, the essential attributes of his Creator; much less can he equal Him who by his own transcendent nature is self-existent and eternal, necessarily immutable, infinite in all his perfections and independent of all other beings. In saying to form our complex idea of God, we may without presumption unite and multiply to infinity those ideas of existence, duration, knowledge, power and happiness which we obtain by reflecting on our own consciousness; but to proceed farther or otherwise, is to forget that God is in heaven, and that we are on the earth—that God is a Spirit, and that we are of the earth, earthy. It is to expose ourselves to the sublime rebuke of Jehovah himself:—*To whom will ye liken me; or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One.* Hence, the caution with which analogies should be drawn between human and divine government; or between an earthly parent and the Universal Father.

To evince the flagrant absurdity of thinking God to be altogether such an one as ourself, let it be for an instant considered, that if this be a legitimate rule of judgement, what kind of a Being must God be?

The very term would convey a different meaning to almost every mind though each might contend for his own idea,—as when a rainbow spans the firmament every spectator beholds a different one and yet all maintain it to be the same. With that wide diversity of view and feeling which

on most subjects obtains between men and nations, *so great* would be their difference in opinion respecting God. The idea which the philosophic would form of the Supreme Being might bear some approximation to his true nature and perfections; but the notions of men in general, would be as derogatory to Infinite perfection and rule, and as multiform, as the rabble divinities which according to the faith of the old Romans, fought, intrigued, made love and intoxicated themselves; who had great power in the valley and none on the hills; who were conquered and transferred with their territories. To pass from one clime to another would be to enter the domains of a strange God—to enter a neighboring house, would be to bow at the altar of another God. If the proneness of the philosophic mind has always been to reduce the Creator to a mere *Anima Mundi*, even the tasteful enthusiast of nature, if at liberty to form his own conceptions of the Supreme Being, would readily substitute for Him, and find it more in unison with his indefinite sensations, to worship

“A sense sublime  
Of something far more deeply interfused  
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,  
And the round Ocean and the living Air;  
A Motion and a Spirit, that impels  
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,  
And rolls through all things!”\*

From the tenor of the foregoing observations, it will be perceived that a *Revelation* from Heaven was indispensably necessary, not merely for the best interests of the human family, but *for the glory of God*. What more proper than that the Creator of the *ends of the earth*, should receive an intelligent homage from all the *dwellers on his footstool*? Surely, He who originates, supports, and disposes of all beings and events, should be known, adored and obeyed by every soul of man. For what has man been so highly endowed, if not for the glory of his Creator? Shall God's high purpose be defeated?

Admitting that a being who, by the constitution of his nature, was capable of ratiocination, is excuseless and deeply culpable, for not having attained to views in some respects worthy of his great original, would it have redounded

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\* Wordsworth.

to the glory of God, that no one amid the mighty throng of all coming generations should acknowledge his existence and adore his perfections? When the *world by wisdom knew not God*; when the mightiest of human intellects had vainly inquired of Nature and their own Reason, and their own Hearts; when still unrelieved from the oppressive want of superior protection, they had deified object after object in rapid succession, until the Being whom they sought to know was confounded in their imaginations, with whatever their eyes beheld, and their hands handled, and their minds contemplated; when, finally, in despair of attaining the object which had worn away the energies of unnumbered minds, and consumed the years of so many ages, they built an altar on the proudest soil of earth, and with one hand lighted a sacrifice to the UNKNOWN GOD,—was it beneath the dignity of that Great Being, to cast a gleam of light athwart the darkness of a benighted world?

Considering the proneness of the human mind to speculate respecting God, and its exceeding liability to judge of him through erroneous mediums, was it unnecessary for the glory of the Unrevealed Name, that God should secure to all mankind an *Inspired Record* of his being and perfections? "Surely," said a heathen,\* "I had rather, a great deal, men should say there was no such man at all as Plutarch, than that they should say, there was one Plutarch, that would eat his children as soon as born, as the poets speak of Saturn." Atheism, itself were more honorable to God than superstition. If the former be disbelief, the latter acknowledges the being of a God but to cast reproach or contumely on his perfections. But how could derogatory notions of God be precluded from the minds of his creatures, were there no authentic record of himself to which we might refer our every conception of his nature, character and government?

The abstract fitness of Christianity to the human mind, might as an influence, be deduced from this subject. The proneness of mankind to recognize Divinity in some stupendous object, or mysterious power of nature;—even when most enlightened to conceive of God as bearing no unapt resemblance to themselves; or to embody their conceptions in material forms, would seem to justify the conclusion, that the human mind either from its own nature or that of its Maker, imperiously

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\* Plutarch.



requires a sensible medium of approach to the Deity. The difficulties too, attending the very conception of a Simple, Infinite Spirit, pervading all space and invested with all perfection, are as leaden weights on the wings of devotion. Constituted as the mind of man is, it must have a legitimate medium of religious worship; or it will virtually degrade and dethrone the Almighty. As if in beneficent adaptation, therefore, to this exigency of our nature, Christianity discloses to us a GOD IN HUMAN FORM; and by the wonders which he achieved, the truths which he spake, and the virtues which he exemplified, enables us to form some definite conceptions of the wisdom, power and holiness which essentially belong to the Invisible Uncreated Spirit; while it legitimates the knowledge and worship of the Father in the acknowledgement and reverence of Him who *is the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of his person*. Thus in his miracle of feeding the multitude, we see the bounty of God; in his severe and uncompromising rebukes, the justice of God; in his tears at the tomb of Lazarus, the tenderness of God; in his lamentations over Jerusalem, we see God's compassion for a lost world; and we know what it is to bear the image of God when we are required to be like Christ; and why it is, we should love God when we think of the loveliness of Christ; and what it is to confide in God when we think of pillowing our heads on the bosom of Jesus. Instead of being any longer at a distance, we feel as if God were immediately before us;—that he is no longer the High and Lofty One, but God stooping to our level and rendered visible to mortal eye in all the loveliness of uncreated perfection,—so fully is the divine blended with the human, the unknown with the familiar; and all that is sublime and majestic and authoritative in Deity, with all that is condescending and compassionate and tender in man.

Philosophy, emerging from the darkness of heathenism, may have greeted the idea of a spiritual, invisible, Perfection; yet what influence could a conception, so abstract, have exerted over the gross faculties of an idolatrous world? None; it was the idea of Deity embodying its perfections in a human form—visiting their abodes—ministering to their wants—sympathizing in their woes—weeping over their graves, which not only arrested their attention, but so powerfully enlisted all their feelings. And thus, its adaptedness to our materialized conceptions, may be regarded as promi-

nent among the secondary causes for the early advancement of Christianity.

From this subject, also, we might remark the adaptedness of Christianity to be an universal religion. As God *has made of one blood all the nations to dwell on the face of the earth*; as in the faculties of their minds and the susceptibilities of their hearts all men whatever their clime, color or condition, are essentially alike, how important that their views of God and their offerings to his Inscrutable Majesty—should harmoniously accord. But think of the unnumbered and endlessly discordant notions which are entertained by rational beings respecting their Creator! Think of the millions of our benighted race who know not God—at this moment, are bowing to gods which are the work of their own hands or the creations of their darkened imaginations! All that the unassisted mind could do, has been done; but still, how many nations are as remote from worthy conceptions of the true God, as if no God existed infinite in his nature, immaculate in purity, and supreme in rule. What remedy can be devised? Is it possible that views so dissimilar and infinitely varied should be made to accord? We need not despair, however, for want of authoritative data, or imperative enunciations respecting Him who to the finite mind is emphatically *past finding out*. We turn to the pages of the Christian revelation. Here, all our presumptuous thoughts are abashed; all our erroneous notions are rectified; all our vague conceptions are vivified and embodied. There we find the true God! The *idea* of him is such as reason in its native, unaided strength vainly attempted to grasp, but to which she instinctively assents; which overpowers us with a sense of our insignificance and yet ennobles the consciousness of our being; which casts a shade over our proudest virtues and largest acquisitions, and yet incites us to greater excellence and higher knowledge; which instead of being displaced, with other notions, by the discoveries of science or the deductions of philosophy,—like an immeasurably distant star, when viewed through the telescope of art, shines brighter and with steadier ray, the longer it is contemplated, and the more closely it is investigated. **I AM, THAT I AM**, is the designation of that sublime idea! **JEHOVAH**—He it is, for the glory of whose incommunicable name, this revelation has been made. True to the high object with which it has been charged by God himself, the Bible, authoritatively pro-

nounces all the gods which men make unto themselves,—vanity and a lie ; it declares on the authority of eternal truth that the world by wisdom knew not God ; it proclaims exterminating war against all imaginations of the depraved heart which have set themselves up against the name of the Most High. Not a thought will it allow in any wise derogatory to Uncreated Perfection and Rule. Having already prostrated innumerable gods, onward the car of Revealed Truth rolls to crush other false deities into the dust,—steadily contemplating the time when every knee shall bow and every tongue confess to the *one only living and true God*.

Amid the many conflicting religious systems of men, but one can be right ; or all are alike false. And surely, that, must be heaven-born and heaven-descended which proposes the same God to universal belief and foretells the day when *all kindreds and nations and people and tongues* shall unite in ascriptions of praise to Him who is *God over all blessed for ever*.

It would not require the nicest powers of analysis to detect in this feature of the human mind which we have essayed to unfold, the origin of idolatry ; of materialism ; of the modern “CANNOT” as applied to God in the conduct of his moral government ; and one prominent cause of illiberality among religionists ; but leaving these points to those who are accustomed to carry out every suggestion however seemingly insignificant, for the very “maxims of the unthinking are to the philosopher the deepest problems,”—we conclude our paper by remarking the importance of referring all our notions of the Godhead to the Bible.

Whatever our pre-conceptions or prejudices, it will be found that they receive no countenance from the word of inspiration. That a revelation to be entitled to implicit credence will not be contrary to pure reason, is most evident, or God himself cannot be the author of reason ; but that its teachings may be at variance with the decisions of the understanding, (“the Faculty judging according to sense,”) is not the less apparent from the study of the Scriptures.

Judging of God by his own self, man is apt to think, *ex. gr.* that the world could not have been made in six days ; that a Great Being would not condescend to reveal himself to his creatures ; that no being could unite in the constitution of his person both the human and divine natures ; that

Trinity in Unity is a contradiction ; that the qualities which commend a person to our esteem and love will secure to him the favor of God ; that it is impossible for even God to judge the thoughts and motives and feelings and actions of every soul of man ; that God will not be strict to mark iniquity ; that he judges by the outward appearance ; that providential favors are evidences of his complacent regards,—and so on ; but it requires no more than a glance at the sacred page to discover, that in six days the Lord formed heaven and earth, and all things that are therein ; that God who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in times past unto our fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son ; that God was manifest in the flesh ; that the Son is one with the Father, according to the declaration of Christ, “ I and my Father are one ; ” that in God’s sight shall no flesh living be justified ; that God will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing whether it be good or bad ; that he looketh upon the heart ; that his providential goodness is designed to lead men to repentance ; that he is not a man that he should lie, nor the son of man that he should repent ; that God out of Christ is a consuming fire ; that though we may think God altogether such an one as ourself yet he will reprove us and set our sins in order before our eyes.

O how little do we know of God ; how false is our every conception of him aside from the revelation which he has made of himself to man. How careful should we be to avoid every speculative or practical sentiment respecting him not countenanced by his holy word ; for *this is the word which shall judge us in the last day.*

If man bear so little resemblance to God ; if God be so transcendent in his nature, perfections and procedures, with what reverence should we speak of him ; with what awe should we approach him ; with what conscientiousness should we obey him. If the angels veil their faces before his throne ; how should man prostrate himself in the dust before the august Majesty of the Universe. If the angels do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his pleasure, how should puny men fear to sin against him by following the devices and desires of their own hearts.

Ah, how far short do we come of that homage which is due to the great God from all his creatures ! As if no more sacredness belonged to the divine than to any human name—

how many *take God's name in vain*. As if God bore the same relation to us with an earthly ruler ; how has his name been bandied about, his character aspersed, his actions misconstrued. Who has not been astonished at the not unfrequent temerity of theological speculations ? Verily, "Fools rush in where angels dare not tread." Who has not been shocked by the levity with which some have approached his august throne—the terms of familiarity in which some who minister at the altar have spoken of God,—as if God were altogether such an one as themselves !

The old Jews would not willingly tread on a bit of paper in their way, but took it up, *for said they, the name of God may be on it*. But among Christians, how many are there who sit in judgement on God, as if he were their fellow—virtually trampling the revelation of himself into the dust.

Ah, we have not the knowledge of God, if we have not learned that compared with his perfections, our wisdom is folly, our excellence is dross,—our very being a shadow which is on the point of vanishing away ; that before him, *all the inhabitants of the earth are as grasshoppers* ; that the worlds which he has made are as the *small dust of the balance*.

Let us recollect, that the Being who comprehends in himself all that is great and pure ; who fills all space and inhabits the praises of eternity can be likened to none of his creatures ; that we can gather nothing respecting him save the few scattered rays which glimmer through his Word ; that we are *concerned* to know nothing save the ways of God as revealed in his word and carried out in his providence. This, indeed, as has been remarked, is the only proper object of religious contemplation ;—the object too, of a truly spiritual faith,—the ways of God to man.

Of himself, he has said—I AM THAT I AM : of the operations of his *own uncreated, independently existent SELF*, he has told us, MY WAYS ARE NOT AS YOUR WAYS, AND MY THOUGHTS ARE NOT AS YOUR THOUGHTS.

ART. IV.—REVIEW OF DR. WAYLAND ON THE LIMITATIONS  
OF RESPONSIBILITY.

WE now proceed to notice a popular but most licentious and detestable notion which Dr. Wayland passed by on the other side. We allude to the doctrine of the supremacy of *conscience* in point of religious *authority*. The author states the false principle, but without that reprobation which it merits. He should have cut off the diseased limb; whether he has wrapped it up and left it to putrefy on the body, our readers can judge from what follows.

Pages 4. 5. "And in short every one feels that he *must* do what his conscience commands, and that he must not do what his conscience forbids, *all things else to the contrary notwithstanding*; he feels too that the word *must* in this case expresses a form of obligation more distinctly and peculiarly *imperative* than in any other of which he can conceive. We do not say that the consciences of men are all equally well informed, or that they decide in all cases with equal accuracy; all we say is, that such is the *authority* of this impulse wherever it is distinctly perceived. If such be the power of the moral impulse, we can easily foresee the consequences which must result from its receiving a wrong direction. The man feels that he *must* obey his conscience at all hazards. No motives of wisdom or prudence or advantage or loss can be allowed to come in competition with this, the *supreme authority* of his being. Nay more, he must devote his whole intellectual and physical force to the accomplishment of the purpose to which he is urged by the *voice of God, thus speaking* in his own bosom. But unfortunately he hath misinterpreted this voice, the whole power of the man is enlisted in the work of mischief. He bids defiance to human law or principle, consequences to himself not only, but especially to others are as nothing. Opposition by convincing him the more strongly of his own rectitude and of the wickedness of others, only renders him the more ferocious. Thus it comes to pass, that evil of every kind is stimulated into activity by the very principle which God ordained to be the *antagonist of all evil*," &c.

We fear all is here granted that Loyola or Peter the

hermit or Mahomet or the Pope need to establish their sort of dominion over the souls of men. The *authority* of conscience omnipotent ! This dogma is the seminal principle of fanatic insanity. True the author adds on pages 8 and 9, "That no question can be presented which we are under so imperative obligations to examine as to *what conscience does really command*" but this sentiment does not cure the evil, *conscience* is still upon the throne, and this caution is but a rag of royal purple that serves only to conceal the *usurper*. Conscience is still *supreme*. This is a *fundamental error*. The *law* of God is the true and only rule of obligation. The only true *interpreter* of this law is God the lawgiver. *Conscientious* interpretation is no more *binding* on the interpreter than on others. *Conscience* has no jurisdiction to *interpret law authoritatively*. *Conscience* is a Pagan oracle, Dodona or Delphi or Ammon. It is "the man within the breast" and not the man at the right hand of God. We might leave this topic here, but fatal delusions are abroad, and we shall call upon conscience, this modest pretender to sovereignty for the muniments of her title. "For this burden concerns the Prince that is in Jerusalem and all the house of Israel."

What is conscience ? the moral sense : in action the perceptions of the moral man, *his convictions* of right and wrong, it is the light within and if that is darkness it is great. In holy beings, who know good and not evil, conscience is a true guide ; if thine eye be single very well, but if thine eye be *evil*, thy whole body is full of darkness. Math. 6: 23.

Scripture never calls *conscience* a *judge* or a *prophet* ; *Itself* is the *subject* of law. As a guide it is blind, and needs illumination from the word and Spirit of God, Rom. 9: 1. and purification by the blood of Christ, Tit. 1: 15. Heb. 9: 14. 1 Tim. 3: 9. It demonstrates accountability ; for moral sentiments are based on its accusings and excusings, Rom. 2: 15. 1 Jno. 3: 20. 21. John 8: 9. It convinces the man that he is *under law* ; but if when arraigned, it assumes the office of judge, *there is no prisoner at the bar* ! His honor has his *own reason* and the *written law* ; but not the *mind* of the lawmaker within his breast : he has no *authority* to *interpret*, he is only a self constituted officer and all his dicta are coram non iudice : 2 Pet. 1: 20. It is the office of the Holy Spirit *alone* to reveal and interpret the law, 1 Cor. 2: 10—16, and the very essence of *Popery* consists in arrogating



this very office. Putting conscience in this matter upon the judgement seat is a practical imputation of *infallibility* and a grant of *plenary indulgence* to every creature! It is DEMOCRATIC POPERY. Supreme dominion, legislative, judicial, and executive, are indispensable to *sovereignty*. It is the *man of sin* that opposeth and exalteth himself above God in this thing. 2 Thes. 2: 3, 4.

Antichrist has assumed three prominent forms,

1st. *Monarchical*, as the Roman and Mohammedan, "the man within the breast" of Mahomet or the Pope, interprets the law infallibly for *the world*.

2d. *Aristocratic*, where some select spiritual nobility or society assumes the interpretation of law for *the world*.

3d. *Democratic*, where the *final* arbiter of right and wrong for every man is *his own conscience*.

Antichrist is *infallible* in every form. The *principle* is the same in each. All in *terms* acknowledge God to be sovereign *legislator*; but man the *subject* assumes the supreme *judicial* and executive authority. He determines in the last resort upon the canons of Heaven and executes his decrees "*regardless of consequences*"! Here are, Jupiter optimus, the Dii Majores, and the household gods.

There is but one God and Mahomet is his prophet.

There is but one God and the Pope is his prophet.

There is but one God and my Conscience is his prophet.

According to the word of God they are all *false* prophets. 1 Jno. 2: 9, 11, 20, 27; Jno. 6: 68; John 14: 26; John 12: 16; Jno. 16: 13. That the popular democratic form of Antichrist is in fact *Popery*, the man of sin, is most manifest because the man does exalt himself to the place of God shewing himself that he is God. 2 Thes. 2: 4.

Such is the nature of sovereignty, that whoever usurps the *judicial* function, puts the law under his feet. Now this is the very soul of Popery whether democratic or not. It says, with its father the devil, to the son of God, "*I will give you the kingdoms of this world, &c. if you will fall down and worship me*, Math. 4: 8, 9. If Jesus will *receive* of *man* the investiture of the empire, he can have the "*iron crown*." He must however do homage to man and acknowledge his spiritual supremacy.

Whether conscience is the "*officina diaboli*," or the "*sanctum sanctorum*," whether the *will* of man or the *will* of God is *law*, to the simplicity of little children, appear ques-

tions of the most momentous import : but many masters in Israel, chief priests, scribes and rulers of the people *say* that there is "no difference:" that the controversies on these subjects are "vain janglings;" that the warfare is a mere logomachy, a dispute about words, and that true philosophy of explanation according to the modern principles of mental science, harmonises all appearances of diversity.

The elect corner stone Isa. 28: 16 ; 1 Pet. 2: 6 ; Math. 21: 44, 45 ; or the precious stones laid by Buffier, Reid, and other Solomons, may be at the *foundation* ; it is immaterial, and all will be right, if men are *doing good*. So say the rulers of the people. "Doing good" is the summum bonum. Conscience knows and feels *what* is good and the will is self-determined in all *conscientious* people to *do* it, "regardless of consequences." John 16: 2. Every one of the people becomes not only a "sovereign" king, but a priest and a prophet. Doing good, "the greatest good of the greatest number," is the common fundamental maxim of Church and State. *In principle*, politics and religion are fused into one mass, and under the influence of this system, every man becomes a democratic absolutist and a democratic Pope. Like their ghostly fathers and royal allies over the water, they form orders, institutions, societies and "holy alliances," to "do good" and maintain their *legitimate* supremacy : and while the *same principles* remain as the animating soul of benevolent action, there will be nothing in truth better than "dead works" or works of *death* in church or state.

Democratic popery not only denies Christ, his gospel and his kingdom : but destroys the great MORAL SECURITY of mankind, by rejecting the NEGATIVE FORM OF LAW, divine and human.

Every *veto* vanishes before an omnipotent *volo* ; the fence of the law is demolished, the tiger is unchained, the lion uncaged, *conscience* has taken the responsibility, "commands with supreme authority, and *must* be obeyed, regardless of consequences !"

The great protestant principle of religious liberty dies in the embrace of popular popery. The true doctrine denies and opposes the right of any man or *set of men* to judge and determine in matters of conscience *for another*. It emancipates the conscience from the *dominion of man*. It affirms *not* the self-sufficiency of man infallibly to determine the

categories of good and evil for himself even, much less for others. It delivers not the soul from the dominion of *one* pope, to put it under the yoke of one thousand popes.

We have now noticed some of the false principles which seem to us to be involved in Dr. Wayland's reasoning, philosophy and counsel. In politics and religion (and in democratic popery it is all one) the following maxims are fundamentally erroneous, nor can good practical ethics be *enforced* without removing such rotten foundations.

- I. That *all* men are born of *right* free and equal.
- II. That the majority have a *right* to govern.
- III. That conscience is the *final* interpreter of law, and its dictates the supreme rule of obligation.
- IV. That *all* power *must* be exerted in doing the greatest good to the greatest number.

On these points we will briefly remark.

The first proposition, as we have heretofore stated is opposed in point of fact by the universal history of the human race: and receives no sanction from Scripture. Its direct and necessary influence is to cause envy, discontent, enmity, and insubordination, (from a lively sense of practical injustice) on the part of those in the state who are in a condition of any dependence or inferiority. They feel that such a state of things is contrary to nature and justice. They carry in their bosoms the elements of the patriotism and religion of the French Revolution.

*The absolute right of the majority to govern* denies every *right* to the *weak*: to the *minority*. For if the majority have an inherent right to govern, their *will* cannot be *rightfully* resisted. But enough has been heretofore said on this topic and on the supremacy of conscience. As to the obligation of rulers to do good, we have seen the principle established by political science to be, not that the state should "do good," but that it should *not* do evil, or suffer evil to be done. In action the legislature should *deny itself*, and not govern too much. In evangelical morality, self-sovereignty is renounced, self-denial exercised, and *submission* rendered to the precepts of the true master.

If democratic papists governed the nation, they would "do good" with all the power of the state their consciences would compel them. In addition to the persuasive powers of money, public opinion, combinations, &c., they would add

the argument of the sword, and then alas, for those saints and sinners who would not become the willing objects for the active benevolence of the dominant benefactors.

Circumstances prevent our presenting this subject, and noticing particularly the "new theology," or popular religion of the day. A system animated by the soul of popery, hostile in its principles, spirit and action to civil and political liberty, subversive of all evangelical morals, and utterly denying the gospel of the grace of God.

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#### ART. V.—JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH.

##### No. III.

WE endeavored in an article in the last number of this work, to prove that justification implies a state of previous condemnation; that the sinner must learn that this is his state, before he will seek reconciliation; that he must have, not a mere speculative belief, but a deep internal conviction, that no righteousness of his own can recommend him to God; that such is the character of Jehovah that he will receive nothing short of a complete satisfaction to his law offered either in person or by substitute: that, consequently, he stands exposed to the eternal wrath of God, which no doings of his can lessen or remove. We endeavored further to show that the sinner must have the persuasion, not only that he is under the sentence of the law, but, farther that this sentence is just: that he approve the equity and reasonableness of the preceptive part of the law, and allow that the penalty attaches no undue severity to the breach of the precept; in other words that he justify God and condemn himself. We, attempted to show, that till the sinner thus convicted by the agency of the Holy Spirit, he cannot receive a Saviour as he is offered in the gospel; that none but this divine agent can produce convictions which are so opposite to the views and feelings of the unregenerate; that till made sensible of the justice of the curse of the law, he must receive the righteousness of Christ not as a gift but a debt; as something which barely repairs the injustice which the law had done

him; that he will receive it as something which is necessary to justify God rather than himself. We showed that the sinner must be prepared to receive the great propitiatory sacrifice not as bringing reproach on the law as unjust but as magnifying and making it honorable in the eyes of all the intelligent universe.

We endeavored to show, that it must be the great object in preaching, to set the law of God home upon the conscience of the sinner; that this law alone, thus enforced, and made effectual by the agency of the Holy Spirit, can produce that deep conviction in his mind that he is justly condemned, which will cause him to give over all attempts to establish his own righteousness, and prepare him for God's method of justification.

We ventured also to express our views of the prevalent strain of preaching in New England in this respect. We are confident that the great object in preaching among the orthodox has been rather to show men their need of sanctification than of justification; that in their zeal for the former the latter has been almost overlooked; that there has not been a persuasion, that besides the exhibition of the preceptive part of the law by the preacher in order to show the sinner his depravity, there must also be one of the justice of its penalty to show him his need of the righteousness of the Redeemer. We are confident that there has not been a firm belief that a distinct work of the Holy Spirit on the conscience is necessary to teach the sinner the nature and justice of his condemnation. But we proceed to offer a few observations on the *ground* and the *instrument* of Justification.

THE GROUND OF JUSTIFICATION is solely the righteousness of Jesus Christ. This alone has efficacy to remove the curse of the law and save from endless torments. This can remove the eternal wrath of God: a wrath that is real and actually follows the sinner through all situations till he believes. It is not, as is represented, a benevolence towards the sinner, which only waits till certain obstacles may be removed and eternal happiness conferred on him without detriment to the moral government of the universe. God views the sinner as deserving endless suffering, and this punishment expresses only his just indignation against him. The Bible has no where taught us that the atonement served *merely* to make it *possible* for God to forgive sin, or to

remove from a dispensation of mercy a certain obstacle which modern divines have discovered. It seems to us that the philosophical speculations on the atonement from beginning to end are pernicious and little less than a subversion of the doctrine itself.

No one can have just views of the efficacy and value of the atonement till he has obtained just views of his own wretchedness from which it delivers him. He who has been taught by the Spirit can never find language to express his conceptions of its value: he sees it a refuge from eternal torments, from the endless wrath of God, the price of his sanctification, of his endless felicity, of the everlasting love and favor of God. He alone who has felt his wretchedness without it, can form any lively views of its value: but all these views fall infinitely below the reality. No Christian can ever comprehend the extent of his obligations, and to the true believer, the *unsearchable riches* of Christ but his own indebtedness to him, will be subjects which will most deeply engage his affections. The apostle Paul always kindles into a flame whenever he touches this subject. It was the great end of his writings to set forth the atonement as the only ground of hope, and to shew the unsafeness of every other means of justification.

But, we confess, that the prevalent philosophical views of the atonement, are utterly at variance with those which we draw from the word of God; and those magnificent descriptions of its efficacy, of the mercy and justice of God, and the compassion of Christ in it, which we meet with in the writings of the Apostle Paul, on this scheme lose almost their whole meaning. We know indeed that God can feel no revenge toward those who violate his law and set at defiance his authority, but unless there be real indignation towards the sinner, unless the sentence of the law express God's real feelings towards the transgressor, we shall be at a loss how to interpret the Scriptures in future. If those awful descriptions of the divine wrath and indignation, mean no more than that God feels the same benevolence (unmixed indeed with complacency) but otherwise the same benevolence towards the sinner as towards holy accountable beings and creatures destitute of intelligence, a benevolence, however, which must manifest itself through punishment, not on account of any inherent desert in sin, but for the good of those who retain their allegiance, then we confess that the language of Scripture from

which the church, till the nineteenth century, did not have a glimpse of the true doctrine of the divine perfections, must be so indefinite and obscure as to destroy all our confidence in any opinions which we may draw from it. But these opinions are drawn altogether from human reason, and on this very account, should have no authority on points which God has decided, aside from the fact that they are contrary to the doctrines which the church has in all ages drawn from the word of God. The merits of Christ then, alone absolve from the curse of the law, remove from the sinner God's wrath, which is real, just and eternal, restore him to the love and the favor of Jehovah, and give him a title to immortal felicity.

The Scriptures universally teach that the only ground on which God bestows the blessings of justification on the believing sinner, is the obedience and death of Jesus Christ. The cross of Christ, however, was to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness: human reason could see no connexion between the means and the end; and even now, let metaphysicians do their best, still it will always continue to be folly to the carnal mind, and nothing but divine grace of God can make it appear to be the power and the wisdom of God. Human reason may explain away the attribute of divine justice, and may give its own view of the atonement, but this is only to introduce a new God, a new salvation, and a new gospel.

If the atonement of Christ be the only ground on which God bestows the blessings of justification on the believer, then he who trusts to circumcision, to penance, to the lightness of his guilt, to the supposed spirituality of his affections, to the sincerity and perseverance of his efforts or the value of his doings, or any unpurchased mercy of God, if he bring any price for a favor, which is strictly a gratuity, and is required to be received only as such, he is trusting in something besides that which God has proposed as the foundation of his hope, and his faith is only presumption. He rejects God's salvation and devises one of his own invention. The true corner stone becomes to him a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence.

But the carnal mind never of itself forms a just and scriptural view of the attribute of divine justice: it will never be persuaded that God can with justice determine what sin is and assign its punishment according to his law; notwith-



standing the best instruction from the Scriptures and the most ingenious and subtile reasoning of divines, the sinner will always attribute the darkened views of his own mind, as to the nature and desert of sin, to God; and not believing in God's justice, he is not prepared to flee to the appointed refuge from it. But when God himself dispels the darkness of the natural conscience, he sees that all the grounds of confidence, which had hitherto given him hope, are unsafe; he sees that his own doings are valueless: that salvation must be gratuitous, if bestowed at all.

The sinner is commanded to claim the blessings of justification on account of the merits of another; he is required to come before an incensed God, and presenting the sacrifice of Christ as a propitiation, to lay claim to his favor and look up to him as a reconciled father; to believe that this offering makes him his eternal friend; knowing that he has deserved the curse of the law, and that his merits can do nothing towards its removal, he is required to plead the obedience and death of Christ as the price of deliverance from it, and as a sufficient title for him to the eternal felicity of heaven. The sinner must have such exalted views of the efficacy of the cross of Christ as to claim these favors on account of Christ's sufferings: and a reliance on it so unshaken, as to be undaunted by the upbraidings of conscience, the accusations of the great adversary, and the threatenings of a holy and just law; he must come forward in spite of these, and with Christ's merits as the price, lay a bold but humble claim to the eternal favor, friendship and beneficence of an incensed God. By faith, Christ becomes the end of the law for righteousness to him who believeth: he is assured, that the obedience and death of Christ are as well pleasing to God as his own perfect observance of the law could have been, and he pleads them with the same confidence for his eternal justification.

The obedience and sufferings of Christ are the ground on which God bestows the blessings of justification on the believer, but

FAITH in the efficacy of the atonement, is the instrument by which these blessings are received or apprehended.

But faith must be built on some express and plain declaration of God: it must have a foundation no less stable than the solemn promise of the immutable God. That faith

which is not supported by evidence, which is the result of mere feeling, of internal revelation instead of the word of God, which builds on some mysterious lights within, on spiritual communication either direct or by means of dreams or any other similar instrumentality, is not Scriptural or such as God requires. He commands us to believe the plain promises of his own word, and to believe any thing else is to be in danger of believing a lie. We are required to believe, not our fancies but the immutable God, and we have no evidence that we have his authority for our faith, except we derive it from the express declarations of his word. It would be in the last degree presumptuous in the sinner to come forward and bring the merits of Christ as the end of the law and the price of justification and eternal life, unless authorized by the express command and promise of God himself; unless he have given him his express authority to do it. It is solely from the declarations of God, that the believer knows any thing either of the nature or of the efficacy of the atonement, and it is only on these that he builds his belief of its infinite value; and encouraged by these assurances, he dares ask all the blessings he needs which are of infinite price, solely on account of this sacrifice.

But what warrant has a sinner to come and present the sacrifice of Christ as the price of his justification and eternal redemption? It certainly is not a direct and literal promise made to him previous to his faith and to be a ground of it. The promise of eternal life is made to him who has already believed some other declaration, and is of course unconditional. "He that believeth in me," says Christ, "hath eternal life:" a direct unconditional promise of eternal blessedness is not made to the sinner while in unbelief, and in search of something to be the foundation of his faith. There is no absolute and unconditional promise of pardon to unbelievers, consequently they cannot build on such a foundation. Neither are there, as some represent any conditional promises made to unbelievers, to which faith is the condition. Such a promise is even an absurdity. The sinner would be required to believe an endless proposition. Faith becomes at once the reception and the condition of the promise. He must believe that God will bestow endless life in case he *do* believe; yes, but in case he *do* believe what? why that God will bestow eternal life on him in case that he does believe that God will bestow eternal life on him, &c.

Few would venture to suppose that the possession of any other moral qualities besides faith is the condition of the promise which is proposed to faith. It remains then that it is a testimony rather than a promise which first gives the sinner warrant to lay hold of blessings held out to him in the gospel.

What then is the warrant which authorizes the sinner to present the sacrifice of Christ to God as the price of his justification and a full equivalent for his own perfect obedience? What authorizes him to claim the righteousness of Christ as his own and encourages him to present it to God as the price of his eternal favor and friendship? It must be some assurance from God himself or so far from being faith, such trust in the efficacy of the atonement, would be the height of presumption.

None have answered this question we believe by saying that the sinner must believe that God has given him, as an individual, an assurance that the atonement has this value in his own particular case: for then the elect must have their very names written in Scripture or else be favored with some miraculous private revelation. But we believe that none pretend to claim such a warrant.

But many have supposed that the divine declaration which is the foundation of faith is this, viz: that God will bestow the blessings of justification on the elect. True, this declaration itself carries no consolation to the one who believes it, since he knows not that he is one of the elect, but then the sinner having ascertained the existence of his faith, is enabled to infer his title to the blessings offered in the gospel. But this would make the foundation of our hope to rest not in God's promise, but upon our faith in it: and our confidence towards God must always fluctuate and correspond to the evidence which our life presents that our faith in God's declarations is the work of his grace in our hearts, and thus in a most important sense, our works and not God's word, become the ground of our hopes. It is contrary to all the current of Scripture and the whole experience of true Christians, that the believer must search himself for evidence of the existence of true faith and holiness in his heart, to be entitled to plead the infinite value of the atonement in his own case, and to entitle him to lay hold on the eternal life, which the Bible assures us is in the Son. If the warrant must be sought in ourselves, our faith must always fluctuate and can never have

any satisfactory evidence for its basis. But the faith which God requires is built wholly on his word and immediately gives peace and stable consolation without forcing the person to search his own heart and life for evidence of the value and efficacy of the atonement in his own case. "In whom," says an apostle, "*believing ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.*"

The gospel is addressed to men as sinners under the curse of the law and needing reconciliation with God. To such "God hath set faith" [Christ] "to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past through the forbearance of God." It is as such that he requires men to receive him, as a propitiation for their own guilt, as a Saviour to deliver them from the curse of the law, and a mediator to reconcile them to God. Having set him forth to them as a Saviour, and requiring them to believe on him as such, he has certainly given to all, to whom the gospel is preached, a sufficient warrant to receive the blessings of justification, and has made the rejection of these blessings and this offered Saviour, the ground of condemnation to those who perish. When God requires the sinner to believe in Christ, he certainly requires him to receive him as *his* Saviour, and not in general terms as a Saviour for a certain class known only in the secret counsels of the Most High. He requires a faith of us, and for ourselves, that is, for *our own* justification; that we seek and embrace this justification in *Christ*, and for ourselves, and not by works of the law. He certainly therefore has given the sinner sufficient warrant to receive Christ as *his own* Saviour, sufficient assurance that his sacrifice has value enough to ensure *his own* salvation, not that of *the elect* for whom he is not required to believe. If the sinner who is seeking for justification with God, will but receive as true God's own declarations of the compassion and power of Christ as a mediator for reconciliation, if he will but believe the divine declarations of the infinite value and efficacy of his atonement, he will come to Christ for *his own* salvation, he will believe on and receive *him* as *his own* Saviour, not merely as the Saviour of an unknown class of fellow beings. Believing in the infinite value of the atonement, as God himself has set it forth, he will present it by faith as a claim for the remission of his sins and the friendship of God; he will present this as a full price and valid title and claim to these

blessings ; but the claim will be presented, not in a spirit of presumption, but of holy confidence ; a confidence which is based on the declarations of God, which is exercised only in obedience to his command, and which is inspired and produced wholly by his grace, and which serves only to magnify God's veracity. When therefore God sets forth Christ as a Saviour and requires men to receive him and believe on him, he gives them a sufficient warrant to receive him as *their own* Saviour. But faith, however, consists not in simply believing the abstract proposition "that Christ is our Saviour;" it is a belief of the testimony which God has given of his compassion, ability and acceptableness as a Saviour ; a firm confidence in the efficacy of his atonement to reconcile God and procure the remission of sins. He who honors God so far as to believe in his truth and sincerity in offering to *him* such a Saviour will receive him as he is offered, a Saviour for himself : but faith is principally concerned not in believing Christ his, but in believing him a *sufficient* Saviour ; in believing God's declarations as to the infinite value of his atonement ; in receiving it and presenting it as a sufficient price for the invaluable blessings which it purchases.

Relying on the divine sincerity in the offer of the atonement, and the divine testimony as to its value, the true believer pleads it for the remission of sins and a title to eternal life. Transported with believing views as to the truth of the divine testimony of the infinite value of this atonement, he only obeys God's express command in claiming every thing on account of it : he claims pardon as *his*, heaven as *his* (for faith makes it *his* country :) he claims God as *his* God just as he is called the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and of all who imitated their faith : just as the writers of the Psalms every where claim him as *their* God. He that by faith receives Christ's atonement in such manner as God has set it forth, by that act, receives God as *his* God, for that is the efficacy of the atonement to make this reconciliation. "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself."

No faith is real except that which is appropriating. To be faith, it must lay hold of Christ as a Saviour. "He that believeth *in me* hath everlasting life." But he who lays hold of Christ as a Saviour, in receiving him in that capacity, receives every thing else : "all things are yours, and ye are Christ's." The believer, though he may have nothing

in temporal things, is yet said to "possess all things." He who by faith appropriates to himself Christ as a Saviour, appropriates also his salvation and in this are comprized pardon, acceptance with God and a title to eternal life.

God, then, has given to every man an ample warrant to receive the blessings of the atonement, and it is only in obedience to his express command, and in belief of his express declarations, as to the efficacy of the great sacrifice, that the believer appropriates the purchased blessings to himself; it is not in obedience to any inward impulse or in the belief of any new and internal revelation, that he is induced to do this. Christ indeed is offered to him as *his* Saviour, not as the Saviour of an unknown class of fellow beings—he is required to receive him as *his* Saviour, and he can perish only by rejecting him as a Saviour for himself.

But it is said that is very easy to believe the divine declarations which thus set forth Christ as an Almighty Saviour. To this, I answer that unconvicted sinners never sincerely believe that they are actually exposed to the evils from which Christ is offered as a deliverer; and when it is said that they are very ready to believe that God is willing to set aside the penalty of his law on account of the atonement, it may be replied that they are equally ready to believe that he would be unjust to execute it upon them, were there no atonement. They always claim salvation as a debt and not as a free gift, as it is set forth to them. Believing that God is too severe in his requisitions, that his law is too severe both in its demands and its penalty, they always receive Christ's sacrifice rather as a satisfaction *for* the law than *to* the law; and if the expression seems shocking, it only expresses the shocking presumption of the sinner, he receives it rather as an atonement for God, than for himself. But this is not faith in God's mercy, 'tis a daring and presumptuous claim upon his justice. But the awakened sinner, who knows what he merits from perfect and immutable justice, who knows also the malignity of sin and how fearfully he has provoked a holy God, such an one cannot imagine that any thing can have sufficient efficacy to remove the divine wrath; he cannot imagine how God can ever be reconciled to him. To such a person, the most mysterious doctrine of the Scriptures, that which requires the strongest faith in the divine veracity in order that it be received, is this, that God, for Christ's sake, is willing to be reconciled to the sinner. He who can come

before an incensed God and present the atonement of Christ as the price of his pardon, his acceptance and an eternal inheritance, has honored the divine veracity by receiving the most mysterious, and to the awakened sinner the most improbable doctrine that was ever proposed to human belief.

But it is objected that to make faith simply a belief in the truth of the divine declarations, is to make it a mere intellectual act, of no merit because involuntary ; that any commands to yield assent must be absurd, inasmuch as our assent is not in our own power, and *must* be yielded where evidence is seen, in *spite of us*, and cannot possibly be bestowed, where no evidence is presented to command it. We are aware that some have seemingly evaded this difficulty, by defining faith to be a belief in God's declarations accompanied with spiritual affections which correspond with the truths themselves. But, aside from the difficulty of conceiving what is meant by affections which correspond to the truths to be received, this definition makes faith something very complex and obscure ; it is something more than belief in God's declarations. It would then imply no holy affections of heart to believe God's promises and solemn affirmations ; something besides is necessary. But if faith in these promises and affirmations actually implies and supposes spiritual affections, then what need of any further spiritual affections corresponding with the truths themselves.

But there is this peculiarity about the truths which faith is to receive, that the intellect is to be employed only in apprehending their meaning, and has no concern with their evidence. Indeed the truths themselves, in general, have to human reason, no internal evidence or probability whatsoever, for they are infinitely above the sphere of the researches of the human mind. The person, in receiving these truths, does not rest on evidence addressed to the intellect, he simply confides in the moral perfections of Jehovah, which are the only basis which support the truth of these propositions. The being who proposes these things for our belief is omniscient and cannot be deceived, and the only evidence which he proposes as the foundation of our faith, is his own veracity. If we believe in the truth of God, we must necessarily, at the same time, believe in the truth of all that he proposes for our assent. "He that believeth not God," saith the Scripture, "hath made him a liar."

The truths which we are to receive on the strength of



the divine testimony, are such as seem contradictory to reason or at best, reason affords almost no evidence in their favor ; they are to be received solely on the ground of God's veracity : that testimony is to be taken as sufficient evidence for truths which to the human mind have none in themselves ; nay more, it is to counterbalance the apparent improbability and even the apparent impossibility which we seem to discover in them. This is to be the sole evidence which we are to have in the most important affairs, those which are to decide our eternal destiny. We grant that there is however a certain degree of apparent probability in many of the truths and declarations of the Bible, and that they may be received with a certain degree of mere intellectual assent by those who are destitute of any spiritual confidence in the moral perfections of the God from whom these truths proceed, and whose moral character is almost the whole evidence which supports them, certainly the whole evidence, on which he requires us to receive them.

But it is urged, can it be that any persons who have had the benefits of a religious education, entertain such blasphemous ideas of the character of God, as to doubt his veracity. To this I answer, who amongst the unconverted believe the divine threatenings, and fly for refuge to the promises ? Who believe that the eternal God is really provoked with them and to that degree that no entreaties, no efforts towards obedience, and no sufferings, can change him to eternity ? The respect which mankind, in general, manifest for the divine declarations, is most clearly exemplified by the conduct of the ancient Jews at their departure from Egypt, when they enjoyed constant communications from God, and were under his peculiar conduct. They had seen, in his miracles before Pharaoh, the most conclusive proofs of his determination and power to fulfil his promise in bringing them into the land of Canaan. When in their journey, he had brought them to the Red Sea, and the hosts of the Egyptians were pressing upon them, when escape seemed impossible, they had seen him open in the deep a passage for them and a grave for their pursuers. Here they sang the praises of God. His providence had so far evinced his determination to fulfil his promise ; but as soon as this providence seemed to indicate that he had forgotten his promise, they instantly murmured. Their faith was built, not on God's veracity, but on his providence, and so likewise was

their unbelief.—A slight frown on them, the slightest trial of their faith, proved it unsound, and they continued to provoke God by their unbelief, till he condemned that whole generation and excluded them from the promised land. This is, and always will be the faith of the impenitent :

The faith of Abraham, of Noah, of Moses, of the host of Israel before Jericho, was exercised in receiving as true, things apparently improbable or even impossible, merely because their truth was built on the divine veracity. Faith then is a reception of truth not from any intellectual perception of any evidence which supports it but from a confidence in the moral perfections of that God who reveals it : unbelief with regard to God's promises and declarations, is simply want of confidence in the moral perfections of Jehovah.

The truth is, the impenitent have such a degree of confidence in God's veracity, that they are ready to place some reliance upon it, but not that which is required ; not that which is necessary to lead to action, and to decide all the important steps in life. They uniformly act as though the divine promises and threatenings were false, as though the divine Being were not sincere, either in his commands or the awful sanctions which support them. They are ready to receive some of the doctrines of the Bible, perhaps most of them, if they can make them square with some favorite scheme of metaphysics, but as soon as reason finds a stumbling-block in any Scripture doctrine, the man cannot move a step till it is removed. He wants some better foundation for his belief than the divine veracity. A foolish and absurd sophism, uttered with boldness in all quarters, has carried away one half the Congregational and Presbyterian Churches, from the acknowledgement of a doctrine which has always been regarded by Christians and infidels, as the corner stone of all the rest. Philosophy lends but a very precarious support to the doctrines of Christianity, when she has succeeded, to appearance, in rendering them probable to human reason. Those who receive them on her authority will always be in danger of rejecting them on the same. It is probably best to make it the great point to establish the divine origin of the Bible and leave the doctrines to stand or fall on the authority of the Being from whom they proceed.

There may be a degree of confidence in the moral attributes of the Deity in those who have attentively observed the display of these perfections, which is made in the mate-

rial world and in the course of Providence ; but nothing short of a spiritual acquaintance with the divine perfections, will produce a firm confidence in them. He who is a stranger to any spiritual hatred towards deceit on its own account, will hardly be able to comprehend how it should belong to any one else. He who can feel nothing but hatred and revenge on the reception of a provocation, can hardly comprehend how God can forgive the provocations of a whole life. It is he alone who has been made partaker of the divine nature, who has been new-created in the divine image, who bears within his own breast the same virtues which support God's declarations, that can thoroughly believe the testimony of God. He whose eyes have been opened to see the moral beauty and excellency of the divine perfections, whose heart is filled with love to this character, he alone can receive all that God says. "Faith worketh by love," and nothing short of a spiritual apprehension of the moral excellence of the divine character, will produce unshaken reliance in the divine veracity. He who *rightly apprehends* the divine character, *must* believe God ; he who *cannot* spiritually apprehend this character *cannot* yield this belief.

Faith then is a *moral* exercise by which we receive truths which are apprehended solely by the intellect. God commands us to believe, because such belief is a moral act ; it is a spiritual apprehension of the excellence of his character as it is displayed in his works, his providence and his word. This spiritual apprehension of the divine excellence gives the believer a stronger persuasion of the truth of the doctrines and promises of the Bible, than the philosopher generally possesses in the evidence which supports the doctrines of his favorite science. In other departments of human knowledge, the opposite to faith is scepticism, or ignorance ; in theology, it is distrust of God's veracity. He that believeth God, adores him ; "he that believeth him not, hath made him a liar." No one can doubt of the truth of all that God teaches and promises who knows God himself.

The apostle James has in the most ample manner taught the moral nature of faith and its influence on the life. He assures us, that it is a spiritual and active principle : something which must go forth into act, which *must* manifest itself in the life and *work* in our *works* ; works are necessary to make faith perfect. "Seest thou how that faith *wrought* with his works and by *works* was *faith* made perfect."

Works are so intimately and inseparably connected with faith, that this apostle has ventured to say "that by works a man is justified," i. e. as he immediately adds, "and not by faith only," not by a faith without works. Faith is an active principle; activity is essential to its nature; it *must* act and it acts in works. Without action, it is dead. "Works are but the acts of faith and "as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also." He who believes that God's promises, threatenings, commands and general declarations are true, must necessarily act on the principle that they are true. He who thoroughly believes the message which assures him of the burning of his house, or the loss of his property, or the death of his wife or family, must feel and act on the ground that such message is true. Men uniformly act on their belief in all the concerns of this life; he who has become convinced of the truth of all that God has taught in his word in the way of promise, threatening, command and otherwise, must necessarily act on this belief. His belief must influence him to act as if these things were true. The reality of faith, then, must be tested, by its power. Abraham in the case of Isaac could act as though God's promise were true, even when his action seemed to be about to make the fulfilment of it impossible. Moses was so firmly persuaded of the truth of the divine promise, that he could leave the most splendid prospects that the kingdom of Egypt afforded, and prefer the suffering of affliction with the people of God before the temporary enjoyment of the pleasures of sin; he was so fully persuaded of the value of the recompense of reward that he regarded the reproach of Christ when connected with such reward "as greater riches than the treasures of Egypt."

Noah was so firmly persuaded of the truth of God's threatenings, that he acted in the most important concern of his life, on the supposition of their certain accomplishment. Nothing could be more improbable to carnal reason, which deifies the laws of nature, than that the earth was soon to be overflowed by waters: nothing more improbable to men immersed in pleasure, enslaved and blinded by their passions, than that the courses, which they had learned to justify to themselves, were exceedingly criminal in the sight of God, and about to sweep all flesh from the earth. But Noah believed the threatenings on the strength of God's veracity, and he proved the reality of his convictions, by acting up to

them. He undertook a work of immense labor, time, and cost, in the sight of the unbelieving world; "by which he condemned the world," justified himself, "and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." Of Noah, it was said, that, "being warned by God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, he prepared an ark to the saving of his house." So also it may now be said of believers, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, they flee to the ark which God has opened for their reception in the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. Their belief in God's threatenings is real, for it is active; without works, faith is dead. They believe God and the reality of their faith is tested by their fleeing from the wrath to come. That faith which is real, is also active. If it have life, that life must manifest itself in action.

But again, faith which is real, must also be holy; it must take its rise in that love which is the fulfilment of the law, "Faith worketh by love." The Scriptures nowhere insist with earnestness on the importance of duties merely intellectual, and in which the heart has no share. To believe God is a holy act of the heart, and every where in the Scriptures is represented as praiseworthy. Faith is the source of all acceptable obedience, and works are only the evidence of its existence. A faith which is not spiritual and has no influence over the life, is said to be dead. "But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead." Faith conquers the world. "And this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."

The Scriptures every where represent faith as the gift of God, bestowed in a sovereign manner. Eternal salvation is suspended on the possession of it, and yet it is a gift. "For by grace are ye saved through *faith* and *that* not of yourselves, it is the gift of God." As love to God is the substance of the law, and yet is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost, so faith is the condition of salvation, and yet the gift of a sovereign God, given "not of works," the apostle expressly declares, "Lest any man should boast" and suppose that any thing in him could be in any sense the price of so precious a gift. Man is never willing to believe that works must originate in faith and grace; he is determined to cling to merit in some shape or other; that if faith spring from grace, yet this distinguishing grace may be merited by works in some shape or other. The writers of the New School ex-

press the opinion perhaps more guardedly than St. Paul, in the passage just quoted, supposes the objection to do. They say that though God bestows salvation as a sovereign, yet that we are not to suppose that he acts in an arbitrary manner in doing it: that he sees sufficient reason why this invaluable gift should be bestowed on some rather than on others: and when they explain themselves fully we always see that these reasons are found in the doings of sinners. It is after all, the works of the creature which determine the decisions of a sovereign God. But the apostle exposes the falsity and absurdity of this opinion. For when he had said: "Not of works, lest any man should boast," he adds, "For we are his *workmanship* **CREATED** unto good works." So far from acting, man is *acted upon*. Do the orthodox teach the passivity of men in regeneration plainer than St. Paul? And would not those awful denunciations, poured out on those who teach old theology, fall with equal force on the great apostle to the Gentiles? He ventured to teach, that we are *created* unto good works: he teaches not that the change is confined only to *acts*, he confines it wholly to the *persons*, "**we are created to good works**" and this not on account of any previous doings, which his reasoning shows could have no value, but solely on account of his own eternal decree: for he says, "**created unto good works**, which God foreordained that we should walk in them."

But although faith is an internal principle wrought in the heart of man by the sovereign grace of God, this doctrine is far from authorizing the undue prominence often given to the sovereignty of God in addresses to the unconverted. Christ, the great object of faith, should be presented to the mind of the sinner more prominently than the sovereignty of the Father in drawing men to a Saviour. The duty of faith itself is certainly inculcated in the Scriptures, and should be so by the preacher, with more earnestness than the duty of acquiescing in the unknown decree which bestows it. But so prominently has the doctrine of divine sovereignty been in the pulpits of New England, that we always hear submission to God made the great duty of sinners, and faith in Christ occupying a place altogether in the back ground. Now does the Almighty absolutely require man to exercise faith itself, or merely to submit to his sovereign pleasure in bestowing it? If faith be a duty, if God requires men to believe on Christ for justification, why go

back farther, and insist that they must also be willing to leave it to the decision of God's decrees whether they should do this duty or not. We are aware that this submission was so earnestly insisted on as a means of shewing sinners the corruption of their hearts and testing the reality of regeneration in hopeful converts. But aside from its being a most distorted view of the terms of salvation, nothing more was comprehended in this submission to the sovereignty of God than is implied in true repentance for sin.

The sinner who has been slain by the law, feels that his heart is only a fountain of sin, and being under the eternal wrath of God, he knows he can never have any claim on that grace which alone can save him. But as soon as this person is softened into repentance by this sovereign grace, he loves God for his justice; he delights in that very attribute which makes his condition so fearful; he delights in the law of the Lord after the inward man, though it cuts off every hope which has its foundation in any merit in himself. That submission which threw the doctrine of justification by faith into the back ground, was really, for substance only one branch of the doctrine of repentance for sin. That sorrow for sin which is genuine, is a holy regret for having disobeyed and provoked a Being of infinite perfections. The sinner sees and adores the justice which condemns him; knowing that divine justice strips him of any claim on grace, he nevertheless delights in this justice; he adores it. But this is only one branch of the doctrine of evangelical repentance; yet so steadfastly had the eyes of the ministry been turned to the doctrine of divine sovereignty, that the other branches of evangelical repentance, and also faith in the efficacy of Christ's sacrifice, were to all practical purposes, almost wholly overlooked.

But men are required to trust in Christ for *sanctification* as well as for *justification*. The gifts of grace are as really his purchase as acceptance with God; and to overlook this truth, is to distort the gospel scheme of salvation. It is wholly in virtue of the union of believers to Christ by faith, that they are favored with internal communications of grace. "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine: *no more can ye except ye abide in me*. I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me he is cast forth



as a branch and is withered." "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his; and if Christ be in you the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness." We have elsewhere said that it was a prime object with the divines of New England to establish the depravity of the human heart and the dependance of the sinner on the grace of God; but the truth that this grace is purchased by Christ as really as the pardon of sin, was kept in comparative obscurity. The spirit of very much of the preaching with which we were once familiar, seemed to be this, that forgiveness of sins and the gifts of grace were bestowed in an arbitrary and sovereign manner, rather than on account of faith in the merits of Christ as the price of these blessings.

The work of salvation from beginning to end, is of God. Christ who is the author, is also the finisher of faith. The disciples besought Christ in person to increase this grace in them. It is this which gives their victory, and Christ who will lose none of those whom his Father has given to him, will maintain this grace in them to the last. If he have bestowed on them this grace, the most precious of all gifts, he certainly will not suffer it to be extinguished. Those who have been favored with this precious blessing are said to possess all things.

They are the sons of God. "Ye are all the children of God," not by nature, but "by faith in Jesus Christ." "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying Abba Father." Being sons they are said to be heirs, "heirs of God and joint heirs of Christ," and being endued with such blessings, raised to such an elevation of dignity and privilege, an understanding is imparted to them that they may "know the things that are freely given them of God." They are favored with the spirit of adoption: called the temples of God: The Holy Spirit dwells in them to work in them all that is commanded in the word. By him the law of God is written on their hearts. They who are led by the Spirit no longer fulfil the lusts of the flesh, "but have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts." "This I say then, walk in the Spirit and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh." "Now the works of the flesh are these, adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, sedition, heresies, envyings, murders, and

such like," "but the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance."

Men become "sons of God by faith in Jesus Christ," and because they are sons, God sends forth the Spirit of his Son into their hearts, who works in their hearts every thing well pleasing in his sight." But this list of virtues is no common one; such a character as they form is, to say the least, of no ordinary occurrence. Such a character would even attract observation and excite remark. But this is the character of all who really possess faith. There is every reason to suppose that however men may err on other subjects, the errors on practical religion are more numerous, more palpable, and more general than on all others, and that the errors in doctrinal religion have their source too generally in superficial views of the nature of evangelical piety.

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ART. VI.—SOME PASSAGES IN THE LIFE OF CONSTANTINE,  
FROM EUSEBIUS.

THERE is possibly no epoch more important in the history of the Church and the world, than the age of CONSTANTINE, a prince whose character has been variously estimated by different writers according to the particular bias of their religious views, and the light in which they have been accustomed to regard an ecclesiastical establishment. To the general reader it is perhaps merely known, that the Christian Church, long proscribed by the secular power, was at length recognized by the State as a *lawful* society by their first *Christian* emperor—that *Christianity* was, to use a vague expression, *established* by him; yet what specific notions are conveyed under this general idea, it would be difficult to determine. The nature of an ecclesiastical establishment has varied in every age; and even in the life of Constantine it underwent two or three important changes in its internal and external relations. The ecclesiastical establishment of Constantine was not that of Theodosius; nor the establish-

ment of Theodosius that of Justinian ; nor the establishment of Justinian that of Charlemagne ; nor the establishment of Charlemagne that of Henry VIII. or of Napoleon ; nor the establishment of Napoleon that of Louis XVIII. ; nor the establishment of Louis XVIII. that of Louis Philippe. It has been the favorite maxim with some to charge *all* the corruptions of Christianity to what is called an *ecclesiastical establishment* with such a sweeping censure, as if Christianity merely needed to become established by the law of the land to neutralize its whole nature and efficiency. A few passages in the *Life of Constantine*, gathered principally from his friend and biographer, Eusebius, might be interesting and instructive to the general reader. They will tend to show the character of the man, and the nature of the ecclesiastical structure reared in his days, so ignorantly lauded or abused by men of different parties.

After the apostles left the earth the church appears naturally to have fallen into a systematic order, without presenting to us any express written scheme from which that order arose. This will appear upon the very face of the documents preserved to us by the most ancient fathers ; and the evidence of this harmonious settlement of the churches will be to those who will search into ecclesiastical history more striking than they are otherwise aware. The pastors were settled according to their respective "districts" or "parishes," the functions of each officer was defined with sufficient precision ; the ecclesiastical provinces were marked out for the general assemblies of the various churches at specified periods ; a conventional subordination was established between the relative functionaries of the ecclesiastical commonwealth ; and eighteen hundred churches, bound together by the ties of one common faith, presented a serried phalanx to the adversary, which perpetually alarmed the vigilant guardians of the old national superstition. According to the particular views of each party, this will be ascribed either to the especial providence of the Divine Author of our blessed religion, or to the influence of those who headed the church militant, and occupied the dangerous post of *overseers*, to the peril of being marked out for certain martyrdom by the relentless heathen. After being exposed to persecution of varied degree and extent, the churches appear to have enjoyed remarkable peace and prosperity for forty-five years, during the first part of the reign of Dio-

cletian towards the close of the third century. This wise prince, naturally humane, appears in the first instance to have connived at the success of the Christians. They now boldly came forth, and adorned the empire with stately and spacious edifices for public worship. The bishops had been the bond which united the churches. They had headed and borne the brunt of the battle; and however ready now in the days of universal toleration, our Catholic denominations may be to impugn the ambition of these bold leaders, it is uncertain what would have been the fate of the various sects of those days, had they not taken shelter under these staunch captains who led the regular array of the church militant.

From the uncompromising nature of the Christian religion which, under the guidance of its able champions, sought to overthrow every other worship, it was impossible that the peace of the empire should subsist long under the connivance which the emperor awarded to an *unlawful* faith. The mildest prince which the Church had ever yet experienced, at length became an odium and reproach to all posterity; and the stigma of the *Diocletian* persecution has branded its author to all time, as an unnatural monster of impiety. It was deemed absolutely necessary for the peace of the empire, that he should decide between the claims of the old and new worship. It was *judged* expedient that Christianity should be crushed and exterminated with all its adherents. The persecution raged for ten years, till Constantine, "raised up by God," turned the tide against the Church's adversaries and struck at one blow such a revolution in the world as it had never before experienced. From the following document, delivered some time after his proclaiming peace to the Christians at Rome, will appear the nature of Constantine's first establishment of the Christian religion.

*Copy of the Imperial ordinances of Constantine and Licinius.*

"As we long since perceived that religious liberty should not be denied, but that it should be granted to the *opinion* and wishes of *each one* to perform divine duties according to *his own determination*, we had given orders, that each one, and the *Christians among the rest*, have the liberty to observe the *religion of his choice*, and his *peculiar mode of worship*. But as there plainly appeared to be *many*

*and different sects* added in that edict [an edict lost] in which this privilege was granted them, some of them perhaps, after a little while on this account, shrunk from this kind of attention and observance. Wherefore, as I, Constantine Augustus, and I, Licinius Augustus, came under favorable auspices to Milan, and took under consideration all affairs that pertained to the public benefit and welfare, these things among the rest appeared to us to be most profitable and advantageous to all. We have resolved among the first things to ordain, those matters by which reverence and worship of the Deity might be exhibited; that is, how we may grant likewise to the Christians, and to all, the free choice to follow that mode of worship which they may wish. That whatsoever divinity and celestial power may exist, may be propitious to us and to all that live under our government. Therefore, we have decreed the following ordinance, as our will, with a salutary and most correct intention, that no freedom at all shall be refused to Christians to follow or to keep their observances or worship. But that to *each one* favor be granted to devote his mind to that worship which he may think adapted to himself. That the Deity may in all things exhibit to us his accustomed favor and kindness. It was just and consistent that we should write that this was our pleasure. That all exceptions respecting the Christians being completely removed, which were contained in the former epistle that we sent to your fidelity, and whatever measures were wholly sinister and foreign to our mildness, that they should be altogether annulled; and now **THAT EACH ONE OF THE CHRISTIANS MAY FREELY AND WITHOUT MOLESTATION, PRESERVE AND FOLLOW THAT COURSE AND WORSHIP WHICH HE HAS PROPOSED TO HIMSELF**, which indeed we have resolved to communicate most fully to your care and diligence, that you may know we have granted liberty and full freedom to the Christians to observe their own mode of worship, which, as your fidelity understands, being absolutely granted to them by us, the privilege is also granted to others to pursue that worship and religion they wish, which it is obvious is consistent with the peace and tranquility of our times; that each may have the privilege to select and to worship whatsoever divinity he pleases. But this has been done by us, that we might not in any manner appear to detract any thing from any manner of religion or any mode of worship. And this we further decree, with

respect to the Christians, that the places in which they were formerly accustomed to assemble, concerning which we also wrote to your fidelity in a different form, that if any persons have purchased these, either from our treasury, or from any other one, they shall restore them to the Christians, without money and without demanding any price, without any super-added value or augmentation, without delay or hesitancy. And if any have happened to receive these places as presents, that they shall restore them as soon as possible to the Christians, so that if either those that purchased, or those that received them as presents, have any thing to request of our munificence, they may go to the provincial governor, as the judge; that provision may also be made for them by our clemency. All which it will be necessary to be delivered up to the body of Christians, by your care without any delay. And since the Christians themselves are known to have had not only those places where they were accustomed to meet, but other places also, belonging not to individuals among them, but to the right of the whole body of Christians, you will also command all these, by virtue of the law beforementioned, without any hesitancy, to be restored to these same Christians, that is, **TO THEIR BODY, AND EACH CONVENTICLE RESPECTIVELY.** The aforesaid consideration, to wit, being observed, namely, that they who as we have said restore them without valuation and price may expect their indemnity from our munificence and liberality. In all which it will be incumbent on you, to exhibit your exertions as much as possible, to the *aforesaid body of Christians*, that our orders may be most speedily accomplished, that likewise in this, provision may be made by our clemency, for the preservation of the common and public tranquility. For, by these means, as before said, the divine favor with regard to us may be extended to the knowledge of all, it is expected that these things written by us, should be proposed and published to the knowledge of all, that this act of our liberality and kindness may remain unknown to none."

Such was the Edict of Milan, A. D. 313, by which Constantine gave the first establishment to the Christian religion. It was enacted in favor of the "whole body of the Christians" in general, and of "each conventicle," and "each one of the Christians" in particular. Constantine in setting the seal of the theocracy upon the thousands of the Christian

Israel, set it upon each particular individual constituent member of it, without favoring any especial branch; and in reading this document after the lapse of fifteen centuries, we might fancy it to be the production rather of a Washington than of a Prince of that remote age. It has required fifteen centuries to teach Christians that which the wisdom of Constantine declares in the very outset, "that he had long since perceived," viz. "that **RELIGIOUS LIBERTY** should not be denied, but that it should be granted to the opinion and wishes of **EACH ONE**." In this document we must not consider Constantine, the *private individual* as speaking, but Constantine in his official capacity as the *chief magistrate* of the empire, as the head of both the Christians and the *Pagans*, so that the sneer of Gibbon with respect to the doubtful conversion of Constantine, derived from certain expressions used by Constantine in his edict, must be retorted on the ignorance of that infidel historian, who could not distinguish between the *man* and the *prince*. The words alluded to are "*That whatever divinity or celestial power may exist, may be propitious to us and to all that live under our government,*" as if Constantine doubted in the identity of the only true God as the God of the Christians. But here Constantine, in perfect keeping with the tolerating character of his edict, wisely professes no God in particular, that he might give no umbrage or alarm to either *heathen* or Christian.

Constantine appears to have been first influenced in the choice of his religion from the faith and example of his father Constantius; who, when the four were associated in the government of the Roman empire, viz., Diocletian, Maximian, Constantius and Galerius,—"*alone in covenant of friendship with God the governor of all things, pursued a course of life averse and unlike to the ways of the rest.*" "He passed the whole period of his reign calmly and tranquilly with his wife, children and household, and dedicated his *whole family to God*, the only King, so that the multitude who dwelt within his palace, seemed to differ in no respect from the form of a church; in which the ministers of God were admitted, who performed daily worship for the Emperor, when this order of pious men and truly serving God, could not even be mentioned elsewhere among the multitude of Gentiles without danger." (*Life*, B. 1, ch. 9. 11.) Constantius presided over Gaul, Spain, and Britain, and ended his life



in the Imperial Palace of York, A. D. 308. Eusebius thus describes the youthful prince. "Constantine was after the manner of that ancient prophet of God, Moses, in daily intercourse with those who were colleagues of his father in the government of the Empire, and when barely passed his boyhood, he was held in great honor among them. At which time of life and in which honor, I myself beheld him, when he travelled with the eldest Emperor to Palestine. Sitting at his right hand, he presented himself in public to every one, and gave signal evidences of that royal nature in him which ever after shone out. As to person, he was fair in complexion, and no one could compare with him in the tallness of his stature or the greatness of his strength, which seemed to inspire beholders with somewhat of terror. But he was ennobled with more virtues of mind than accomplishments of person, among which his *modesty* especially adorned him—then his more polite acquirements, next his innate good sense, and lastly a wisdom impressed upon his mind by God himself, remarkably fostered as it were by peculiar nourishments." (B. 1, ch. 13.)

"When those in power considered this noble, vigorous and majestic youth, endowed with a lofty and upright mind, they were struck with envy as well as fear, and narrowly watched some seasonable occasion by which they might disgrace him with some serious charge. Which the youth perceiving (if indeed the snares fabricated against him were not once and again openly detected by the interposition of God) he sought safety in flight and in that respect imitated the example of the great prophet, Moses. God also did all things for his sake, providentially contriving that he should be at hand to succeed his father." (*Life* l. 14).

"For immediately when he had escaped the snare, he quickly drew nigh his father, and after a long absence he suddenly came into his presence. At that time the life of Constantius was at the very point of termination. But when he saw his son so unexpectedly return, leaping from his couch he embraced him; and that which alone afflicted the hour of his departure with sadness, the absence of his son, he declared was now removed from his mind, and he poured forth prayers to God in thanks. Now he said, he looked upon death of more value than life; and so set his family and all his concerns in order. And placing himself in the midst of his sons and daughters who surrounded him

like a choir, he, in his palace, and on his royal couch reclining, having delivered the inheritance of the empire to his eldest son by the common law of nature, departed this life." (*Life* I. 15).

Constantine was thirty-two years of age, when he succeeded his father and in full vigor of body and mind. He had been for the last fourteen years in the court of Diocletian, and had been engaged in the Persian war; and his extraordinary sagacity together with his familiarity with the princes—made him fully acquainted with all state intrigues. On detecting the schemes laid against his safety, he hastily escaped from Nicomedia by night and travelled with extraordinary despatch through Bithynia, Thrace, Dacia, Pannonia, Italy and Gaul, just in time to meet his father who was preparing to embark for Britain, or according to Eusebius to receive the imperial office from his dying hands at York. It was in the sixth year of the Diocletian persecution. Constantine had secretly imbibed some general faith in Christianity, both from his father and also from the household of Diocletian, which naturally mild prince had fostered the Christian doctrine in his family, his officers, and his household, like Constantius; and who, while he publicly officiated in the sacrificial rites of the heathen gods, was possibly in private "almost persuaded to become a Christian," had not some circumstances occurred, which led him to take that decided course against Christianity, which filled the Church with blood, and which might seem to explain the subsequent conduct of Constantine himself.

It must require a mind well acquainted with the human heart to penetrate into the counsels of princes; but an acquaintance with the blessed gospel will open the eyes of the understanding to many secrets of human nature which infidel sagacity might not discover. The secret of the Diocletian persecution lay not in the avowed hostility of the faithful to the pagan idolatries, but in some doctrines which were propagated in the *camp* totally subversive of the basis upon which the Cæsars rested their very name and government. To declaim with eloquence against the vices or superstitious practices of paganism, might be tolerated with secret favor, because a religion of purity and order was congenial to the easy administration of good government. But when "Marcellus, a centurion, threw away his belt, his arms, and the ensigns of his office, and exclaimed with a loud

voice, that he would obey none but Jesus Christ the eternal king, and that he renounced for ever the use of carnal weapons," the supreme magistrate whose authority lay only in his legions, was touched to the quick, and was roused like a lion from his lair. Galerius dismissed a great number of Christian officers from their employment; he passed a winter in secret consultation with Diocletian in the palace of Nicomedia, and persuaded the emperor to exclude the Christians from any employment in the household and the *army*. A council was summoned, and the final measure of persecution was extorted from the reluctant Diocletian. A. D. 303.

Constantine was secretly in favor of Christianity. He beheld with horror and disgust, he himself avers, the torments inflicted upon the Christians, whose only crime was their religion. Yet he aspired, one day to be both Cæsar and Augustus. He must have deeply reflected on the direct causes which brought on the persecution, viz. the tenets of Marcellus. How could he himself vindicate the cause of the Christians and yet retain his own military sway over the Empire, if those principles were true? "Jesus Christ confessed himself to be a king, whose kingdom was *not* of this world, whose servants did not *fight*." The noble Marcellus had "witnessed the good confession and kept it without spot unrebukeable." Yet Constantine felt that he must depend upon his legions for supreme power. "The whole empire will I give thee if thou wilt fall down and worship me." yet Christ had said, "the Prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me."

We must, however, properly place these reflections of Constantine five or six years after the edict of Milan, on his second or third expedition into Italy, A. D. 324, against Licinius. He was possibly not before made *practically* acquainted with the troublesome tenets of Marcellus, which, there is strong evidence to believe, still infected the army to some extent, and which possibly drove his colleague Licinius into a revocation of the Milan Edict, and another persecution, to suppress which Constantine again took arms; for we find that "in the councils which were assembled under the gracious protection of Constantine the authority of the bishops was seasonably employed to ratify the obligation of the military oath, and to inflict the penalty of excommunication on those soldiers who threw away their arms during peace." (Gibbon, ch. 20. note 27.) Eusebius is unaccountably inconsistent,

While he makes Constantine adopt the religion of his father on his accession to the throne, he afterwards refers his conversion to his *vision of Christ* on his *first* expedition to Italy before the Edict of Milan, and insinuates that he did not know who *Christ* was till then, though he had been all his life trained in Christian courts!

"He determined that, the God whom his father sacredly adored should be alone served and worshipped. Wherefore he implored his aid with prayers, besought him, entreated him, that he would signify to him, both how the events which he proposed in his mind should be effected and that he would lend a helping right hand to their accomplishment. To the emperor, therefore, praying these things and earnestly supplicating, a certain divine vision and most astonishing, appeared: which if perhaps any one else had told it he would not so easily have gained credence, but when the victorious Emperor himself told it to myself, who write this history, a long time afterwards, when I was honored with his acquaintance and with familiar conversation *with him*, and when he confirmed his assertion with an oath,—who can hesitate to give credence to a fact so well authenticated, especially when in after times he gave such valid testimony to his declaration? When the sun had passed the meridian, a little after noon, he said that he beheld with his own eyes the sign of a luminous cross suspended over the sun and an inscription on it composed of these words; **BY THIS CONQUER.** Great astonishment filled himself and his whole army who accompanied him on his march, and were so made spectators of this prodigy. He declared, that he was yet distracted with doubt as to what that prodigy might mean; and night closed upon his long and deep meditations; that Christ then appeared to him in sleep with the sign of God which appeared in the sky, and instructed him to make a standard in imitation of it, which he should use as a protection in engaging with his enemies." (*Life*, B. 1, ch. 22, 23.)

If Constantine saw the *vision* of the cross *before* the Edict of Milan on his first expedition to Italy, he does not appear to have made use of the *standard* of the cross, the *Labarum*, till above ten years afterwards, when he declared himself the enemy of Licinius. (*Life*, B. 2, ch. 6, 7, 8, 9.)

With regard to the *OPEN* vision taken simply by itself, there is nothing in it contrary to credibility and the *style* of the divine miracles. It suited the importance of the occasion,

the precarious state of the affairs of the church, and the yet unconfirmed faith of a soldier, upon whose sole arm, humanly speaking, the fate of the religion depended, and which upon any sudden disaffection to it on his part, might be once and for ever crushed. **BY THIS CONQUER** was an omen which might be applied in various ways. If Constantine was well versed in the principles of Christianity; if he were secretly convinced of its truth; if he had known what obligations it laid upon those who embraced it; and if he balanced the genuine import of the prodigy in the scale of his own ambition, we may find a clue to his doubts. It might mean, that he was to sling up the command of the army, and take up the cross of Christ and follow him, to a spiritual victory? "He was distracted with doubt what the prodigy might mean." But he *must* have known that "the good confession" of the martyr Marcellus was the cause of the Diocletian persecution. The whole vision must have been a long dream of ten years contemplation, and *then* its true meaning came out; which was, that he should frame a standard not of the eagles but the cross, and sanctify war and blood with the name of a crucified master, who "came not to destroy but to save;" who said, "put up thy sword into its place; for all they, that take sword, shall perish by the sword," which detects the whole imposture. This "lying sign and wonder" was sufficient to silence every contumacious *Christian* soldier ever afterwards; and to the example of Constantine imitated by succeeding Emperors and Christian Sovereigns, may be traced all those legal and wholesale murders, which have been perpetrated under the banner of the cross—to that "pernicious dream" we may trace the evil tendency of all Constantine's after acts of persecution, his family broils and executions, which the most extraordinary *personal* piety and devotion could not avert.

There is reason to believe, that there is no pious imposture, which has been palmed upon the credulity of the Church, in which the Divine Author of our religion has not taken care to insert the clue to its own detection, or infix upon it some significant stigma of its falsity. The *Labarum* was a pike intersected by a transverse beam, and surmounted by a crown of gold, in which to express the figure of the cross, were inserted and intertwined the letters X and  $\zeta$ , the Greek initials of the name of Christ, but which rather rep-

resented a serpent in the cross, than the Being upon it who was the Truth itself. The name *Labarum*, which, says Gibbon, "has been vainly derived from almost all the known languages of the world, and for the etymology of which, the Latin, the Greek, Spanish, Celtic, Teutonic, Armenian, Illyric have been ineffectually tortured," might easily yield to Hebrew philology in the words לֵב עָרָם and signify, *the soul of cunning*, an epithet which has been scripturally applied to the father of lies in his form of a serpent.

But we must not imagine that the frank and noble soldier all at once fell into this systematic deception till he had been more deeply initiated into the inner mysterious policy of courts. It is a fact, though a lamentable one, that the maxim was very early introduced into the Church, that it was lawful to deceive, if any beneficial result might accrue from the deception. The banner of Constantine might adorn the faith of the *Jesuit* but not of *Jesus*; and it is an undoubted truth that Jesuitism has not been confined to the order, which has borne the name, but has been too widely diffused among all the denominations of the Christian world.

Nevertheless whatever might have been the imposture or self-infatuation of the Emperor Constantine, he was indubitably an agent of God in the vindication of the cause of Christianity. If he was the subject of a "lying spirit," if he was the designed instrument of a strong delusion, if the vision had been a reality, and the dream a "pernicious dream," who shall dare arraign the course of an allwise Providence, who trieth the souls of men? What is that to thee? To the law and the testimony, if they speak not according to these, there is no truth in them. "If a prophet speak a lying word (against the revealed word), I have deceived that prophet, saith the Lord." We ought never to be diverted from the revealed word, however contrary might appear the mode of God's inscrutable government of the affairs of the world. "Follow thou me." "The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and our children." If God had even inspired the tongue of the serpent at the fall, yet man had no right to listen against an openly declared command of his Maker delivered in *propria persona*.

The Son of man alone could overcome when tempted, and despise that secular dominion assumed to be in the gift of Satan. His aspirations were to establish a spiritual king-

dom, not a kingdom of force by what Xenophon calls the "godlike art of ruling over willing minds."

But whatever credence we may give to the miraculous part of Constantine's life, "he," says his biographer, "openly announced himself to be a servant of God, and frankly avowed himself to be a minister of the Great King." (*Life*, B. 1, ch. 2.) He considered himself raised up by God to vindicate the cause of Christianity; and without any reference to certain prophecies in the Apocalypse, which have been applied by Sir Isaac Newton and others to the triumph of Christianity over paganism, he caused himself to be described in a picture suspended over the vestibule in his palace, in the attitude of trampling a dragon under his feet transfixing through the middle with a lance. (*Life*, B. 3, c. 3.) Whenever there was any dissension in the Church, he mingled among the ministers as if he had been to them "a common bishop ordained by God," and he particularly favored those who were inclined to peaceful measures, declaring that he received the greatest joy from the common concord of all. (*Life*, B. 1, ch. 37.) "When he entertained some bishops at a banquet," says his biographer, "he said in my hearing: you are bishops *in* the church, but I am ordained by God a bishop *out of* it," that is, I take charge of its external affairs. (B. 4, ch. 24.) He announced himself not only to be a partaker, but he officiated at the Passover as if he had been a priest of the Christian mysteries. (B. 4, ch. 20, 22.) He prayed and preached among the bishops and the assembled church, (B. 4, ch. 29, 32); and his biographer has preserved one specimen of his sermons, appended to his life, but which is too long to make an extract from here, so as to do justice to its merits.

"Stirring up his mind as it were with some afflatus and instinct for divine things, he spent often whole nights without sleep; and writing his sermons at his leisure, he held frequent congregations with his household, because he thought it to be his part, to rule those obedient to his government by the reins of reason and so subject his whole kingdom to the empire of reason. So an immense multitude were accustomed to flow in at the nod of the emperor that they might hear him philosophizing. But if, during speaking, any occasion occurred to him to discourse concerning theology, standing up erect, with a compressed countenance and a subdued voice, using the greatest prudence and mod-



eration, he seemed to inspire and restrain the minds of those present with a celestial discipline. Which thing when the grateful applause of the people followed, he was accustomed to intimate by a nod, that they should look towards heaven, and with reverent praises they should admire and worship God, the King of all. When he wished to speak in a studied form of many things; he first refuted arguments, by which through great error a multitude of gods had been introduced; proving, that the superstition of the Gentiles was the source of fraud, and the stronghold of error concerning God. Then he recommended to them, one God presiding over one empire. Afterwards he discoursed generally and particularly concerning his providence; and then descending to the dispensation of our Saviour, he also showed how this dispensation must necessarily occur according to the requisitions of reason itself. Starting from this, he reasoned upon the final judgment of God, in such sort, that he seemed to strike the minds of his hearers with the greatest terror, when he severely reprov'd plunderers, the authors of injury, and those who were inveigled with the insatiable love of riches. But, as it were smiting and chastising some of his friends in his discourse, he forced them sometimes, as if stricken in their conscience, to cast their eyes upon the ground, as with a clear voice he testified and proclaimed, that they must render an account of their actions before God. For, that he himself submitted his earthly empire to the empire of God, and had to render an account to him for every thing transacted in it. That all mortals would render hereafter an account of their lives to the great King. These things he perpetually testified and inculcated that God was their Master and Creator. But he indeed, retaining in an extraordinary manner this true and unfeigned faith, believed these things and taught them: but they, slow to understand these things, and deaf to these illustrious precepts, applauded with their voice and their shouts; but, blinded by insatiable cupidity, despised them in reality. It is reported, that to some one of his intimates, when once caught in the act by him, he said, How far then, good man, shall we fulfil this insatiable avarice?" (*Life*, B. 4. ch. 29.)

The next year after the affair of the cross, Constantine assembled the council of Nice and gave the *second* establishment to the Christian religion. A. D. 325. He came into the assembly of bishops, says his, biographer, "like a cer-

tain celestial angel of God, clothed in brilliant purple, shining as in a bright blaze of light, and illuminated with his brilliant rays." He meekly took his seat on a golden stool in the centre of the episcopal circle after the bishops had assented by a nod. (*Life*, B. 3. ch. 10.) Constantine was still in favor of peace and toleration. He could not conceive why Christians might not each and all enjoy their particular opinions and yet live in one bond of the ordinary and usual unity of the ecclesiastical government. He had been averse to the theological controversies they had met to settle; and he had not yet departed from the pacific views of the edict of Milan. Constantine addressed the assembly and told them, that he did not expect, that after having vindicated the liberties of the Christian church against its pagan persecutors, he should ever have to quell faction within its own bosom. (*Life*, B. 3. ch. 12.)

The Church under Constantine became formally connected with the State. We have already seen, that he had appointed himself a Bishop out of the Church; but had he extended his authority no farther than he claimed under the edict of Milan, had he confined his care to the protection of Christians as members of the state and subjects of his temporal government, his protection had been a blessing. But instead of leaving the Church to manage its own affairs, to judge its own members and to inflict only spiritual and ecclesiastical punishments and censures, he consented to bring the civil power to the punishment of ecclesiastical offences, and by thus blending the ecclesiastical with civil power, doubtless prepared the way for the pernicious principle that so long prevailed in the Church; that errors in belief are to be punished by the civil authorities. From this pernicious maxim, which had its origin, and was always sustained, by the connexion of the Church with the state, rather than in any peculiar disposition which has existed in the followers of Christ to persecute each other; from this pernicious principle, the Church has not yet wholly cleared herself. It retained its hold on the minds of the best men in the Church for about twelve centuries. And when it received its death-blow in Protestant countries, the cure was almost as injurious in its first and immediate effects, as the disease itself had been. Men immediately went to the opposite extreme, and because ecclesiastical bodies, without any interference from the state, were to inflict only *ecclesiastical* censures and

have no further authority, it has been maintained, that even this authority is an infringement on the rights of freemen; that the Church should have no bond of faith; should profess no system of belief; but that every member should have the right of communion with the body of Christ and also of believing and propagating, under its authority, and with its influence, whatever sentiments he should see fit.

Constantine on *taking to himself* the office of a *priest out of the Church*, and in a most important sense, *over the Church*, immediately gave a taste of the character of his influence, and made it evident that such influence from the state over the Church, was dangerous. He was ignorant of the immense, the vital importance of the question to be decided by the council of Nice. Heretics have ever made it their first point, to veil their sentiments in artful and plausible phraseology, which, to an inexperienced mind, would seem to be nothing but the great truths themselves, which it designed to overthrow. When we hear men earnestly contending for, and zealously endeavoring to propagate, opinions which they confess make but a slight alteration in long received doctrines; particularly when we hear them ridiculing, and charging with the most abominable consequences, the old doctrines, and yet professing, in the same breath, that their *new* ones are the same in *meaning* and differ only in *terms*; that the disputes relate only to "*terminology*" we may be assured that these persons are dangerous heretics. Arius had taught that Christ was a creature, created by the Father out of nothing, and yet he had the skill to conceal his sentiments so artfully, and to adopt language so nearly resembling that of the orthodox, that he persuaded great numbers that there was no important innovation in doctrine taking place in the church; there was great danger that he would have further time to sow his tares of heresy, and, by persuading the pastors to sleep on, that the crop would have time to choke and destroy the truth. Constantine was seduced by their plausible expressions, though later in life, he was friendly to the heresy itself. In his letter to Alexander and Arius, he says, "that the controversy was one, about which no canon or ecclesiastical law prescribed any thing; that the Scriptures did not give them a handle for this controversy; that there was no new error introduced about religion; but that they all held the same sentiment concerning the faith—that it was not right that a whole people

should be thrown into dissension about such trivial matters! The emperor used his mighty influence to produce, what he called, peace; that the church might not be divided; that questions on trivial subjects, should not destroy Christian fellowship: that is, that the whole Church should give her sanction to the opinion, that the doctrine of the Trinity, and the proper divinity of Christ, is a mere trivial question; he appealed to the feelings of humanity in the breast of the orthodox bishops, as though these men would be influenced by *their feelings*, to decide that a man might innocently teach that their Saviour was only a creature; he made the same appeals which the advocates of heresy are now making to the feelings of the orthodox, that they should declare that it is a slight error to give up the doctrines of original sin and of divine efficiency in regeneration and sanctification. But those assembled pastors, who doubtless knew as well as the Emperor or the Arians, the importance of peace and unity, knew also the importance of truth and the real unity of faith; and they dared not, for the sake of an apparent or pretended unity of faith or of feeling, to give their sanction to the doctrine, that it is a trifling error for one to deny the Lord who bought him. Had the pastors listened to the emperor it would have only been giving their public sanction to the innocence of the Arian heresy.

But the influence of the civil authority in adding penalties strictly temporal to the decisions of the Council of Nice, was hardly less inauspicious to the well being of the Church than to attempt to prevent ecclesiastical action on it altogether. To suppress inquiry, and to punish error with the civil arm, are alike foreign to the true principles of toleration. If an ecclesiastical body, whose constitution prescribes the qualification of its members, have no right to decide this question, or even sit in judgment on it; if they are to be told that it is of no importance whether nominal members have the constitutional qualifications, then there is an end of ecclesiastical liberty: but if this power is to be taken away *by the civil authority*, then the civil power has annihilated the most important right which that power is engaged to protect. The constitution of the ecclesiastical body is destroyed by the civil power. It would have been well if the Bishops had opposed the influence of Constantine in the one case, with the *same* enlightened firmness that they did in the other. But the principle here first introduced among christians, and

maintained in the church for so many centuries, was to have time to develope its evil consequences and to give demonstration of its evil tendency for ages; and perhaps there is scarce any truth better established in Protestant Countries, than this: *that ecclesiastical offences should be visited only by strictly ecclesiastical punishment.* But we must take our leave of Constantine for the present number of this work.

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ART. VII.—LETTERS TO A SOUTHERNER.

LETTER VIII.

DEAR SIR:

You may have wondered that I have spent no more time in shewing that the New Haven theology is contrary to the evangelical system of doctrines as generally professed in the Protestant Church, and also to the formulas of doctrine which the divines of the New School profess to believe, and solemnly engage to teach, whether in the pulpit or professor's chair. This enquiry I shall now attempt to answer.

That the doctrines of the New School are heresy, I have supposed too obvious to be questioned by any who have not embraced them. I have therefore confined myself to the labor of shewing them to be a system of dangerous philosophy. They who deny the doctrine of native depravity also deny the doctrine of regeneration, and sanctification by the Holy Spirit. This has been the case in all ages of the church. How can they who deny the existence not only of total depravity in *man himself*, but the possibility of *any* depravity in him; who place all real sinfulness in acts, how can it be supposed that they can believe that *man himself* is created unto good works? The truth is, these men *ridicule* and *blaspheme* the doctrines, which the Protestant Church has embraced in her creeds and confessions of faith, on the subjects of native depravity and regeneration. They endeavor to cast odium upon them, under the terms of physical depravity and physical regeneration, and charge them with consequences which Socinians and infidels are too prudent often to attempt to fix upon them, in a public manner. Who supposes, that a school in theology who teach that God does all in his power to prevent

sin, can really believe the doctrine that *he decrees the existence of human actions*? Who that believes that God does all in his power to convert both the elect and those who are lost, can really believe the doctrine of election, as expressed in the creeds and confessions of faith which prevail in this country. It has not been the principal or the leading object with me in these letters to prove that the New Haven theology, as it is called, is heresy—(which is evident on the very face of it)—I am confident that it is *infidelity*. I regard it as a scheme of philosophical principles, drawn from human reason, at variance indeed with the doctrines of the gospel, but more especially at variance with the law of God; which confounds the distinction between holiness and sin; which wholly annihilates this law and all the spiritual precepts of the Bible, which are its substance.

I attempted to shew that this system begins by sinking the authority of the word of God, down to a level with that of human reason. This doctrine is boldly maintained in several articles in the *Christian Spectator*, and is found announced with more or less distinctness, in most of the writings of that school in theology. In *Ch. Spec. Vol. 9. No. 1.* is an article which has this title “on the authority of reason in theology.” Here the writer boldly states the doctrine, that a man may place the same reliance on his own reason as on the word of God on the subjects treated on in the holy scriptures. On the first page he says “it will be our object in the present article to establish and defend the following proposition, viz: *that the clear, unperverted deductions of reason are as binding in their authority, and not less truly to be relied on, than the word of God.*” The writer of this article, and several other writers in the *Christian Spectator*, even take for granted, that a man can know when his reason is unperverted, and also that this pure reason can decide, and may decide on points already determined by the Bible. Supposing there were real sincerity in thus acknowledging the authority of the Bible, there would be something absurd in defending the importance and competency of a new tribunal to determine questions already settled by another. What would be thought of a civil constitution which should establish a new court to examine questions upon which another had power to give a final decision and which had even done it. But a writer who has in several articles discussed this subject in *Vol. 3d. of the Ch. Spec.* gives an example of the

manner in which reason is to decide on doctrines discussed in the Bible. He brings the doctrine of native depravity, which the Protestant Church has always drawn from the word of God, and considered at the foundation of the evangelical system, before the tribunal of reason and there determines that it is false, and then refers the matter to the Bible with a very respectful deference. "We have seen then that *common sense* is competent to decide whether the nature of man is itself sinful or whether all sin consists in voluntary action" . . . . . "It is then, plainly the decision of competent unperverted common sense, that the doctrine of physical depravity is false and that all sin consists in voluntary action. The latter then is the truth." Having determined this by common sense, in the very next sentence he pays a very handsome compliment to the Bible. Having said, "The latter then is the truth" he instantly adds, "We now proceed to ascertain the decision of the Bible on this subject." Ch. Spec. Vol. 3. p. 465. A very difficult enquiry to one who had begun with the position that the decisions of common sense were infallible truth, and that the Bible could teach nothing contrary to it, and who had already obtained the infallible verdict of common sense. Paine or Hume or Voltaire, could not set the authority of reason higher than this writer had done, though they might not have thought of paying so civil a compliment to the Bible.

You will please to observe, that common sense must always first decide what is true or false on any subject, and then, with all deference and reverence, apply to the word of Jehovah (which can teach nothing contrary to it), and see if the same thing be not true or false by that.

I shall give a few additional proofs that these writers hold to the plenary **INFALLIBILITY** of what they are pleased to call unperverted, competent common sense: and that the profession of giving an equal authority to the word of God, is utterly insincere and false; that they actually give it no more authority over the human mind than Hume or Thomas Paine would have been willing to allow it.

First then I say, they teach that man, by his own reason, is competent to decide what the word of God **CAN** or **CANNOT** teach on a given subject; that having determined these important questions, he is to find out what it actually does teach by the regular laws of interpretation. Hear one of their writers "Those who think alike and correctly respect-



ing, first, *what CAN and what CANNOT, be the true meaning of the DIVINE WORD, (AND THE HUMAN UNDERSTANDING WE BELIEVE, IS COMPETENT TO DECIDE ON THIS POINT)*, and who secondly, *apply the right method of ascertaining what the meaning really is*, will doubtless mainly coincide in their conclusions, and these will be founded in truth." Ch. Spec. Vol. 3. p. 117. Human reason then is to decide what the Infinite and omniscient God CAN or CANNOT teach, and then to consult his word to see what he does teach. Would Paine or Voltaire, had they believed that God had actually spoken in the Bible, would they, with all their presumption, have been bold enough to advance the doctrine that human reason is competent to decide on what could or could not be the doctrines of this word? The Bible was given to instruct human ignorance; but does he acknowledge either any authority or any value in this revelation, who claims the right of deciding, by his own reason, what doctrines it can, and what doctrines it cannot teach? The same writer whom I have just quoted, asserts in another place most explicitly, that reason is competent to decide what is true or false, or as he expresses it what is "contrary to the known nature of things" or agreeable to it and that no sense of scripture can be contrary to this. He says, "Who does not go on the supposition that no sense of scripture can be correct which is contrary to the known nature of things? *And that he is competent to discern the agreement or discrepancy of a given meaning, with the truths or realities designated by that phrase?*" Ch. Spec. Vol. 3. p. 138.

These writers abundantly declare that common sense is infallible on the questions decided in the Bible, provided it be competent and unbiassed: and if ever a subject should be beyond human powers or if it should be a question on which the person is in danger of any bias, he can determine this, and may be infallible if he pleases without the Bible. We have seen what authority is given to reason; let us now see what authority is accorded to the Bible. Here they teach that this reason which is infallible without the Bible, is also to interpret the Bible. But in what manner? Why we must admit no interpretation contrary to reason, or in the words of one of their writers we must adopt the position that "the real meaning of any divine declaration is always in accordance with the decisions of competent unperverted common sense. This has been before proved." Ch. Spec.

Vol. 3. p. 465. So then common sense must decide what the Bible teaches. But what is this but determining that common sense can decide what is true or false, not only for itself but also for the Bible. The Bible must teach nothing which common sense disapproves. We will now see what use a writer makes of this important principle of interpretation; that he uses it to shew that the word of God cannot teach the great doctrine of the moral depravity of human nature which has been the belief of the Church in all ages. He says, "Again the real meaning of any divine declaration is always in accordance with the decisions of competent, unperturbed common sense. This has been before proved. And as has been shewn, we have such a decision of common sense that there is no sin or sinfulness *in* our nature but that every thing of such a character must be voluntary. Ch. Spec. Vol. 3. p. 465. Common sense then is made to decide not only what is true on this subject but also what the Bible teaches on it. The writer last quoted advances the principle, that to interpret the Bible according to what common sense has decided to be true, is the foundation of every valuable rule of interpretation. "We interpret certain declarations alike figuratively or alike literally, because other previously known *truth* requires us to do so; and *that truth* is established by observations which our own reason makes upon the nature and relation of things. *It is upon this solid ground* that EVERY principle of interpretation, that is of any value, must be built." Ch. Spec. Vol. 3. p. 455.

We had just proved, by quotations from these writers, that they teach in general that reason is infallible on the very same questions which have been decided by the word of God. We will here interrupt our present argument a moment to shew that they hold that the *competence* of reason extends to all doctrines which are of any *practical* importance, and that her authority is perfectly absolute over the whole field of revealed truth. These writers tell us, in so many words, that the doctrines which are beyond the competence of reason, are of no *practical* importance. "But there are limits and those speedily attained where that power [reason] fails. Within them, why may not we walk as if we were *treading upon solid ground*, as the Author of Reason doubtless intended we should. Beyond them, it would be of no PRACTICAL BENEFIT if we could go, and therefore we need not mourn over the weakness of human reason. Ch. Spec. Vol. 4. p. 498. But has reason no power

in the field from which he seems to exclude her? Can she not decide on the truth or falsehood of revealed doctrines on subjects beyond her competency? One of their writers decides "that the real meaning of any divine declaration whatever, is always in accordance with these decisions [of reason], that the scriptures can never teach any thing positively inconsistent with them, *even on those subjects which lie beyond the reach of unassisted reason.*" Ch. Spec. Vol 3. p. 144. And what would you suppose this writer would have us to do where we consider a passage of scripture on any mysterious subject as contrary to reason? he tells us in the next words, that we have a right to decide, on this ground alone, without any evidence that it is not genuine, that it is not a part of the word of God. He says, "and that *no passage*, to which a fair and just interpretation assigns a meaning known to be false, *can be part of a divine revelation.*" Ch. Spec. Vol. 3. p. 144. These writers are not content to give every individual absolute authority to decide by their own competent unperverted reason, what the word of God can and what it cannot teach. They anticipate and provide for a very natural emergence, for the case, where a declaration of the Bible can, in no possible way, be tortured into an agreement with the decisions of common sense. And what do they do here? They give the reader authority to remove from the canon of scripture, whatever his reason decides to be false, let the evidence of the genuineness of the passage be what it may. "Or if a passage will *BEAR* but one interpretation, and that one contrary to a known and well-tried *deduction* of right reason, *is it possible that ANY purely historical evidence in favor of its being from God, should be equal to the evidence of such a contrariety against it?*" Ch. Spec. Vol. 4. p. 502.

Having sufficiently shewn, that they teach that human reason is absolutely infallible, on all the great subjects contained in the word of God which have a *practical* bearing, and that it is authorized to decide, independent of any other evidence that any passage contrary to her dictates, is not a part of the Bible, we proceed to give still further proof that they teach that every one is at liberty and even under obligations to interpret the scriptures so as to make them agree with the dictates of his own reason; that is, that he is to bring the Bible to agree with his reason and not his reason to agree with the Bible.

A writer in the Ch. Spectator gives a specimen of inter-

preting agreeable to the dictates of common sense. "We are not" says he "to 'press every word to the utmost it will bear,' but to interpret it as well as other passages, in accordance with the plain dictates of common sense." Vol. 3. p. 466. The passage was one which has always been supposed to teach the doctrine of native depravity, and the writer had determined on the preceding page that we have a dictate\* of common sense, that this doctrine cannot be true; it followed, therefore, that it was to be interpreted agreeably to such a dictate. These dictates of common sense which are declared to be immutable truth, and by which we must determine the meaning of the Bible are dignified by the pompous title of "*the philosophy of common sense*." "Now, will any man shew us" says one of these writers "that there is not and cannot be, a philosophy conversant with the reasons of things in the moral world, or if you please, with its general laws or facts, which shall also be as correct, and as easily proved as the Copernican system of astronomical philosophy? Certainly, there are first principles, or reasons of things in the moral world, as there are in the natural; if so there may as well be a science, and a true science of the former, as of the latter . . . . Were we to give a name however to the science of first principles in the moral world, which should convey the most meaning in the shortest compass, we should call it *the philosophy of common sense*." After spending one paragraph to prepare his readers for the sentiment, he advances the position, that it is in accordance with this true philosophy of common sense, that we are to interpret the Scriptures. "In maintaining that there is a true philosophy which is to be applied to the interpretation of the Bible, we are not without the support of all interpreters and theologians of note." Ch. Spec. Vol. 4. pp. 664, and 665.

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\* To shew still more fully what is meant by interpreting the Bible according to the dictates of common sense, we give the following quotation. Ch. Spec. Vol. 3. p. 457. "And in doing so we are wholly governed by the principles under consideration, viz. that *nothing* can be received as revealed truth which contradicts common sense or the competent unperverted reason of man." Again. "In admitting therefore that the Bible contains nothing contrary to common sense, under certain limitations, we do virtually admit that under the same limitations, it can contain nothing contrary to reason." Ch. Spec. Vol. 4. pp. 500, 501.

Now on these principles, what knowledge is certain and to be confided in, the Bible or common sense, which is always to fix on the Scriptures a meaning agreeable to its own dictates, or, if it find a passage which will not "bear" such interpretation, is at liberty to exclude it from the canon? The writer whom I have so often quoted, shall decide this question in plain terms, though his reasonings have determined it already. One thing is certain, that if the decisions of what is called competent unperverted reason, are *infallible*, they are certainly *final*: and if we should be civil enough to call the Bible also infallible, yet if we always have within us and at hand one guide that is absolutely infallible, it is very clear that any other is unnecessary, aside from the fact, that we are required, either to mutilate the Bible, or make it agree with infallible common sense. But I wish you particularly to observe how plainly this writer teaches that the decisions of reason are final, and that there is no appeal from them to the Bible. Let us hear him decide what knowledge is to be depended upon, the Bible or human reason. "There is therefore, if these things be true, *a kind of knowledge to be depended on*, consisting in the uniform decisions of the competent, unperverted reason or common sense of mankind. From these decisions, understood as we have explained them, we confidently maintain, *there is no appeal*. Common sense is the *infallible* umpire, and of right ought to be considered as the final one in all cases when it is competent to sit in judgment. If its decisions be not final, we ask, whither shall we resort? Is it said 'to the law and to the testimony?' But how are we to determine what the law and the testimony mean, *except by this same common sense*." Ch. Spec. Vol. 3. p. 136. If competent, unperverted common sense is *infallible*, it is evidently absurd to talk of appealing from its decisions to the Bible, and the writer might have said so; but he has chosen to shew the absurdity of it in another way. He says, "is it said, to the law and to the testimony? But how are we to determine what the law and the testimony mean, except by *this same common sense*?" If the Bible must be interpreted by common sense and in such a manner as to agree with what are called the dictates of common sense, it is clearly *absurd* to appeal from common sense to the Bible. It is as if a man should appeal from himself to himself. If the decisions of what is called "*the philosophy of common sense*"

be **INFALLIBLE TRUTH**, and if we are required to interpret the Bible so as to make it agree with these decisions; if we must receive nothing from the word of Jehovah *contrary* to these decisions; then the authority of these decisions is indeed final and the Bible has no authority at all distinct from this philosophy. Those who profess these sentiments *utterly renounce the authority of Revelation*. Almost every English infidel has paid great compliments to the Bible, while secretly denying and undermining its authority; and though these writers may say many civil things in praise of it, yet such opinions as have been quoted are a full denial of its authority over our opinions and belief.

Had Pelagius appeared before any ancient synod or council under the charge of heresy, and begun his confession of faith by asserting, that the competent and unperverted reason of man has the same authority in religious matters as the Bible; that a man is at liberty *by this* to determine what the Bible *can* and what it *cannot* teach; that he must make the Bible agree with "*the Philosophy of common sense*" and receive nothing from it contrary to this philosophy; had that heresiarch professed this as his practice, and claimed the liberty to exclude from his Bible every passage which would not bear this rational interpretation, I ask, would those Fathers have waited to enquire whether he were a heretic after hearing him confess that he was an infidel? For certainly a denial of the authority of the Bible in matters of faith is avowed infidelity. Would these fathers have waited to learn, whether this man had derived the faith once delivered to the saints from the philosophy of common sense? Had the Arminians, at the synod of Dort, ventured to present such a confession of faith, would they not have justly incurred the charge of infidelity? But these views have been published, year after year, in a work conducted by the leaders of the New School party, and which circulated almost exclusively among those who profess those opinions in theology. The same sentiments appear, under various degrees of disguise, in very many of their other publications. No public opposition has been made by any members of the party, to such a public avowal of infidelity in their leading periodical.

After these statements, as to the authority of the Bible, you will not expect that the peculiar system of these writers is to be traced to that as its source. In fact it is notorious,

that their principles are extremely abstract, and supported almost wholly by arguments drawn from human reason. It is as one well observes, "the philosophy of common sense." Now as abstract principles, by the very quality of abstractness, are apt to conceal their true character and tendency even from those who may profess them, I have endeavored to examine this philosophy with some attention and not without some suspicion. How far the nature and tendency of these principles may be known to those who first investigated them and who may be supposed to retain a partiality to their own conclusions; or how far they may be known to those youth who have received them from those whom they have always held in respect and veneration, it is not our province to determine; of one thing we have become convinced and will endeavor to assign to you the reasons of our conviction, viz. that they are in direct hostility to all spiritual religion and even tend to the subversion of morals by confounding moral distinctions, and weakening the sense of accountability in those who fully understand their true character and tendency.

The first opinion, upon which I shall remark is one which we have already noticed at some length, and which is at the foundation of the system. It is this: That human nature is not the subject of any *moral* depravity in the proper sense of the term; that is, such depravity as is offensive to God; that such depravity or sinfulness can be predicated only of acts. That human nature therefore is wholly free from any real *moral* defilement as much so as that of God or holy angels, but still that there is something in man's nature, which will make it certain that his first and all succeeding acts will be in the proper sense sinful. "If by original sin" says one of these writers "be meant the *ground of certainty* that the first acts of the soul and all its acts, till renewed by grace, will be sinful; then we admit the *thing* with a protest against the perversion of the word sin to signify that which is not itself transgression, but only the ground of the certainty of transgression." Ch. Spec. Vol. 9. p. 612. Another writer observes, "A ground of certainty likewise exists, according to Dr. Taylor, in the mind of each individual of our race, that the first and all subsequent act of moral agency, will uniformly be sinful previous to regeneration." Ch. Spec. Vol. 1. p. 375.

Another writer thus states the fundamental position of



the system, "and as has been shewn, we have such a decision of common sense, that there is no sin or *sinfulness* in our nature, but that every thing of such a character must be voluntary." Ch. Spec. Vol. 3. p. 465. These passages (and numbers more of the same tenor might be quoted) establish the following position; *that human nature itself is perfectly pure, or free from any moral defilement, that it has in it nothing offensive to the eyes of an infinitely holy God: but that there is something in it, which makes it certain that all man's acts will be sinful.* Now, when men have laid it down as a principle, that the decisions of human reason, (call it competent and unperverted if you please) that these decisions on religious subjects, are infallible truth; when they claim the liberty to interpret the Bible according to these, and the right, when they find a passage which will not "bear" such interpretation, to decide that it is not a part of the Canon of Scripture, whatever their doctrines may be, they rest on the authority of reason and not on the Scriptures, and however they may appear to resemble scripture truth, they are to be suspected and closely examined as to their nature and tendency; they are to be examined, not to establish their truth or error, for it may be taken for granted that they are not scriptural but only a system of rationalism. Men do not begin the foundation of a system of scripture truth, by denying the authority of scripture. They are to be examined as philosophy merely. Now we are convinced, that this first principle of what is called the philosophy of common sense, is thoroughly bad both in its nature and in its tendency.

In the above propositions they *appear* to teach the doctrine that all man's acts are of a sinful nature; but it would be manifestly unphilosophical to suppose an effect, one too, of steady and constant occurrence in all men of all ages past and present, without some regular and proper cause; and it would be too bold to deny that this cause has any connexion with the fall of Adam: They therefore affirm, that this cause exists in man's nature, is inherited from Adam and produces the same effects which Calvinists ascribe to original sin, or as these men are pleased to style it, physical depravity. But this *something* in man's nature, which produces such fearful effects, is also something which has no moral character; it is not offensive to God, and should be no cause of humiliation or self-loathing to man. There is no proper sin-

fulness (by sinfulness I mean that quality which renders the subject of it offensive to God,) there is no proper sinfulness in *man himself*, but only in *his acts*. That men have all those sinful volitions which are comprehended in the sins and crimes of fraud, lying, malice, revenge, pride, hatred, theft, arson, treason, murder, parricide and such like, is no evidence of any sinfulness in them, for all sinfulness and all goodness properly called such, consists in acts; there can be no depravity back of acts. This doctrine has an extensive application. All the acts of God and holy angels are holy and those of devils are sinful: there must be some cause for an effect so constant in these agents; but it can be owing to no goodness in holy beings that their acts are all holy, and to no sinfulness in sinful beings, that their acts of volition are all sinful, though it must be owing to something; there must be something of course which makes it certain that their volitions will all be of this character: but to predicate holiness, in the proper sense of the term of God or angels themselves, instead of their acts, or sinfulness, in the proper sense, to Devils, is absurd; there is no *moral* difference between holy beings themselves and sinful ones; but only a certain something, and since it cannot be owing to any goodness or badness in the agents, it must be owing to a kind of fate, to which God and all beings are subject, which makes it certain, that all their volitions will be of a certain character. This something in man, makes it as certain that all his volitions will be properly sinful, as the balance wheel of the watch makes it certain, that the motions of that machine will be regular: but there is no more *moral* depravity in this something than in the balance wheel. Professor Stuart and some others have consented to call this something, depravity, but he tells us that the Saviour of the world possessed it,\* though in a less degree than the men whom he came to redeem. Now this something in holy beings which makes it certain that their volitions will be holy must differ in some respects from the something which makes it certain that the volitions of sinful beings will be sinful; for opposite effects must have causes at least different: but this difference is not of a moral nature; there is no *moral* difference between a being whom we improperly call holy and a sinful one; the difference in their nature, which lays a foundation for the

difference or rather opposition in their acts, is not of a moral nature. Now what will be the influence of promulgating the doctrine and producing a conviction in the community, that sinful volitions are evidence of no moral qualities in the agent; and that even those volitions which appear in the most shocking crimes, are no evidence of any *real depravity* in the agent? I know that of late there has been a disposition to call this something by the name of depravity; but as it is not of any moral nature, it must be physical depravity and not moral.

What can tend more effectually to nourish pride, than to teach men that their natures are perfectly pure, that is, free from all moral defilement; that they are even capable of none, do what they will: for this depravity can never get back of acts. On this system, it is absurd to predicate proper sinfulness of any thing but acts. Sin then is not the manifestation of *any thing bad* in the man and derives no bad quality from the agent.

How soon will men give up actual sin, when they have once denied that which is original. What more contradictory than the position, that all the acts of a perfectly pure being, i. e. one who is free from all moral defilement, should be sinful? When once you have convinced men that they are necessarily and immutably pure, you must convince them that all their acts are sinful, by arguments that have never yet been discovered by human reason; it must be some new chapter in the philosophy of common sense. Bad as these acts may be, they express no quality of the agent and derive not their bad qualities from him. But we shall presently attempt to shew, that actual sin is about as effectually explained away as that which is original.

I ask if this be not a system of absolute fatalism? A race of beings, without any wrong native dispositions toward God or moral objects, have nevertheless in them something which makes it certain that all their acts will be sinful, offensive to God, and deserving of his wrath for eternity. These acts, from whatever source they derive their bad qualities, certainly derive none from the agents, who can have none themselves; but still they bring down on these agents the eternal wrath of Jehovah. Now I say, that this *something*, which, under given circumstances, *makes* it certain that man's volitions will be of a certain character, is, in the proper sense, the cause that, under these circumstances,

they are of this character ; but, if the person who holds this doctrine, prefers the term "occasional cause" he may use it ; though it seems absurd to call that cause *occasional* which, under given circumstances will *always* make the effect certain, that is, which is *indissolubly connected* with a certain effect.

Of what significance is it to talk about the power of contrary choice, when there is something *else* which makes it certain that all the acts of the will shall be sinful ; or if it be maintained that it is the power of contrary choice, which *makes it certain* that all the volitions will be of a particular character and will bring man under condemnation, what absurdity to produce this power, as a peculiar evidence of man's freedom from fatality. It is with a very bad grace that a school in Theology announce themselves as the peculiar opposers of fatalism, who nevertheless start with the position, that there is *something* in an innocent creature who has not a single sinful disposition or inclination towards God or any moral object, which yet makes it certain that each of his volitions from first to last will be offensive to God and bring him under the sentence of his law.

We pretend not to assert, that the New Haven theologians hold the other doctrines of the Bible with the same qualifications as they do those of original sin, of regeneration and the efficiency of God in the production of holiness. Had they merely introduced the heresy of Pelagius, we should have thought the error more harmless ; but, as they have attempted to overturn the doctrines of grace, not by the Bible but by a peculiar philosophy, we regard the danger far more serious. We regard their positions themselves as to the comparative authority of reason and revelation, as a denial of the authority of the Bible, and their peculiar philosophy of common sense, as subversive of some of the fundamental laws of human belief, as wholly infidel and licentious in its nature and tendency. This I shall attempt still farther to establish a few pages onwards.

## ART. VIII.—NORDHEIMER'S HEBREW CONCORDANCE.

*Proposals for publishing by subscription, a Complete Hebrew and Chaldee Concordance to the Old Testament, with an Introduction and Appendices. By Dr. Isaac Nordheimer, Prof. of Orient. Langg. in the University of the City of New-York, and William W. Turner.*

## PROSPECTUS.

“AMONG the variety of works that now constitute the apparatus of the Biblical Student, there is not one which should rank so high as the Hebrew Concordance. In the first place, it can teach naught but what is true; for all its materials are drawn directly from the Bible itself, and in it nearly the whole of the Old Testament is contained. It furnishes the Grammarian and the Lexicographer with the data for their respective labors, and constitutes the only unerring test of the correctness of their conclusions. It affords constant aid to the interpreter of Holy Scripture in expounding dark and difficult places, by enabling him to use the Bible for its own elucidation. Even the tyro in Hebrew studies may receive from it essential assistance; since by its means he can at once ascertain the true derivation and inflections of words, to which his grammatical knowledge may oftentimes be insufficient to furnish him the clue.

That the force of these truths has long been felt and acknowledged in the learned world, is evident from the numerous Concordances to the Scriptures which have been published in various languages from time to time, and that too at periods when the production of works of this nature and of such magnitude was attended with far greater difficulty and pecuniary risk than at present. It is true indeed, that Buxtorf's Hebrew Concordance, published two centuries ago, has been suffered, although long become extremely scarce, to remain the standard work ever since; a fact which would seem almost unaccountable, especially when we consider the numerous defects which the lapse of time has made apparent both in its arrangement and execution, did we not also reflect on the many obstacles lying in the way of the

successful completion of so laborious and expensive an undertaking.

Although the projectors of the present publication do not undervalue the difficulties they will have to surmount, yet, being aware of the daily increasing demand for this most necessary help to the right understanding of the original Scriptures, knowing from experience the strength of their own resources and the means which with the blessing of God they can command for insuring success, and sensible of the great assistance to be derived from the admirable Hebrew Concordance of Dr. Fürst, now publishing in Germany and nearly completed, they have resolved on making the attempt to produce a new Concordance that shall be adapted in all respects to the wants and taste of this age and country. With this view, it is their intention to embody in their work all that is essential in that of Dr. Fürst, and at the same time to render it as convenient for use and bring it as much within the means of all classes of students as possible, by excluding from their plan every thing that, however valuable and interesting in itself, does not properly fall within the scope of a Concordance. Such, for instance, is the lexicographical portion of Dr. F.'s work, which, while it cannot enable the student to dispense with a separate lexicon, renders the Concordance itself both unwieldy and expensive. Besides comparing with the Bible every quotation contained in the work, and rectifying the mistakes, of which there are still not a few, they will also remedy some defects of arrangement which they have discovered, and adopt an improved method of indicating the inflections of words.

For the information of those who may not have enjoyed an opportunity of becoming acquainted with the production of Dr. Fürst which it is intended to make the basis of the projected publication, it may not be amiss to enumerate some of the principal advantages it possesses over all that have preceded it. Besides the essential improvements made by this indefatigable scholar on the general plan of Buxtorf, together with the additional insertion of many hundred citations and even entire articles, and the correction of an immense multitude of errors with which the references abounded, his work will contain, among others, the following highly useful appendices (except the sixth), which will also be inserted in the "Complete Hebrew and Chaldee Concordance."

1. An etymologico-alphabetical Index of all the words in the Old Testament, with references to the pages of the Concordance on which they are to be found.

2. A purely alphabetical Index of the same, with similar references (this will prove of much use to the beginner).

3. A tabular view of all the Forms of Nouns, with their origin and mode of formation (highly important to the grammarian and lexicographer).

4. An alphabetical List of all the Particles, i. e. of all the pronominal roots, with their compositions and formations.

5. An alphabetical List of all the Proper Names belonging to the Old Testament language.

6. An alphabetical List of grammatical forms difficult for beginners to trace.

7. A Chronological Table of the Sacred Writings."

In recommending to the public Prof. Nordheimer's proposed Hebrew Concordance, we cannot give a more concise summary of its merits than that contained in the prospectus itself. We have therefore prefixed it to the few remarks that are intended to be offered. It is very common to speak of a new work as supplying a great desideratum. We know however of no one to which the term may with more justice and propriety be applied. A Hebrew Concordance is indeed a desideratum in our theological literature. We need not say, a good Hebrew Concordance; for it is a fact, that this is the first attempt in our country at any thing which bears even the name. Were it a mere vocabulary, furnishing the most concise references to all the passages in which the various words might be formed, or a mere numerical list of texts, it would in fact be a work of more value than the most accredited lexicon within it, and more deserving of a place in every Clergyman's library. No commentary, translation, or lexicon can supply its place. To use the language of the prospectus "it can teach nothing but what is true. It is a self-interpreting lexicon. It guides us to the meaning of the Hebrew, through the same process, by which we become acquainted with most of the terms of our native language. Very few comparatively of the words we meet with in English authors (to say nothing of the language of common discourse) have ever been examined by the aid of a dictionary; and yet we feel as much confidence in our knowledge of their correct application, as though that pro-



cess had been gone through in every case. The *understanding* of a word is something more than a knowledge of its separate meanings, whether primary or secondary, as they are often arbitrarily arranged in a lexicon. It is not only true of connecting and qualifying particles, but also of all parts of speech, except the lowest class of nouns, that their full meaning cannot be felt nor correctly given when viewed as standing alone. Abstract terms of any kind therefore, can only be said to be *understood*, not by a direct reception in the mind, of the abstract or independent idea they contain, but by an apprehension of the fitness of their connections with the other members of a proposition. This apprehension is gained only by a constant and habitual observation of the company in which they are found, and of the associations with which they are most naturally united. In the case of a dead or foreign language, the Concordance is an expedient by which the length of this process is shortened, and its results condensed. It points out the primary and secondary application of terms, not by a confused array of all possible meanings leading to all possible interpretations, but, by familiarizing the mind with the spirit of the word, and by keeping prominent the one primary sensible meaning which forms the connecting bond of all its various uses, enables us to determine with confidence, that precise force and bearing which is intended in any particular connection.

Few persons, comparatively, can be expected to become such thorough masters of the Hebrew, as to be able to read every portion of the Old Testament scriptures with ease, and thus to make it their sole and daily medium of communication with the inspired volume. Without the aid of a Concordance, however, nothing less than this will render their knowledge of the language in a critical point of view, much more than a mere reliance upon authority. After all, the lexicon is only substituted for the translation. The spirit of the language is not caught. The student has not obtained that familiarity with its idioms, its *usus loquendi*, its modes of conception, which alone can place him in a situation approximating to that of the ancient writer, or so bring the words to his mind in connection with their primary and idiomatic associations that he can feel that he has grasped the true and only meaning which in any particular passage was intended. Laborious study, and constant reading for many years, can

alone give this *tact* in criticism, and elevate the student above the condition of the mere pupil of authority.

Perhaps no cause has given rise to more frigid and forced interpretations, than that mere knowledge of lexicons, which stops short of what we have styled the spirit of a language, or such a degree of familiarity, as extends not merely to the outward expression and its various possible meanings, but to the subjective state of mind from whence its particular applications arise. A simple minded reliance upon an accredited version is a much safer guide to a sound and practical knowledge of the sacred volume.

In the present state of the clergy in this country, but comparatively a small portion can be expected to reach this point of attainment. Even those who have laid a good foundation in the theological seminary, find their subsequent duties demanding such unremitting attention, that the utmost they can expect, is to retain the imperfect knowledge which they may have acquired. The greater part, discouraged by the prospect of the labor necessary to a thorough and critical knowledge of the language, suffer their early acquisitions to pass away. A very few add to them, while a much smaller portion still, are the subjects of that enthusiastic fondness for sacred literature, which overcomes all obstacles, and leads to a critical acquaintance with the primary channels of Divine inspiration.

It would not be difficult to prove, that those whose time and circumstances will not allow them to advance thus far, had better, (*in the absence of other helps,*) trust to those noble scholars and warm-hearted christians who have given us our common English version, than to imperfect judgments derived from the lexicons of professed Neologists, who with all their learning, and perhaps sincerely intended through Gallio-like impartiality, cannot avoid displaying their rationalizing spirit in almost every page of their works. These, it is true, may be helps of great value to one who intends to make thorough work, and to pass beyond that stage in which he remains dependant upon the lexicographer, to the sources from whence they themselves have drawn. If this however cannot be done, he had far better avoid bringing his mind in frequent contact with those neological interpretations, which aim in every possible case to divest the scriptures of their claim to be considered a supernatural revelation.

It may then be asked, if this be a true statement of the case, shall the study of the Hebrew be abandoned by all those whom want of time, and pressing ministerial avocations forbid to cherish the hope of becoming critical expounders of every part of the sacred volume? To this inquiry we would reply, that there is a remedy, which will not only supercede the necessity of such abandonment, but which if faithfully applied, will prevent the danger of those crude and forced interpretations, or rather conjectural applications of possible meanings, which are the results of a reliance upon the lexicons alone. The faithful use of the Concordance plants the imperfect scholar, in respect to any particular words and phrases, or any particular portions of the scriptures which for the time being he may be called to investigate, on the same vantage ground, that the more advanced critic occupies in respect to the whole Bible. With an accurate knowledge of the grammar, and such a facility in reading as may enable him to ascertain the associations of those terms he wishes more closely to examine, he may determine their meaning generally, and their particular applications with nearly as much confidence as the best lexicographer. He has all the advantages which they enjoy, except perhaps the aid derived from the cognate tongues, and which are far from being as important as many enthusiastic scholars would represent. He may, it is true, be very deficient in that species of minute criticism, which traces the name of every rare plant or animal mentioned in the Bible, through all the Shemetic varieties, but the body of the language, the more important terms for all theological purposes may be made his own, not simply as *remembered* from the lexicon but known and felt in all their force, in a similar manner if not in an equal degree with the words of his native tongue.

The Old Testament is all that remains to us of the language, and therefore the knowledge of the more important Hebrew roots must be derived mainly from the Hebrew itself. For this purpose, by the aid of a Concordance, it affords facilities which perhaps are presented by no other tongue. Words much more readily explain each other in the Hebrew than in the Greek. Had the Iliad been the only surviving relic of Grecian literature it would have presented far more difficulties than the Bible. For this peculiarity it is indebted to its parallelism, which in innumerable

ways brings out the meaning of words that are comparatively rare, by connecting them, by way of contrast, resemblance, climax, amplification or antithesis, with those which are of more common occurrence. It is thus, that parallelism should be regarded not as a mere poetical ornament but as designed by God for one of the most important helps in the elucidation of the Holy Scriptures. Roots which occur but two or three times in the whole Bible are generally in such connections, as on a comparison of passages to leave but little doubt of their proper primary sense. The remark may be extended also to many cases of that class of words that are styled *apax legomena*. The root *bathar* for example, and the noun *bether* derived from it, occur only in Genesis 15: 10, and Jeremiah 34: 19; the root *tzana* only in Prov. 11: 2, and Micah 6: 8, and yet what student would have any doubt as to their meaning after comparing these passages and observing the associations and antitheses in which they are placed. He can obtain little if any more light from the lexicons than what is furnished by the passages themselves.

To take examples of more common and important terms, let us suppose that a clergyman whose acquaintance with the Hebrew is somewhat limited, wishes to arrive at a true knowledge of the word *tzedhek* (righteousness) in its various applications; all that he has to do is faithfully to examine every passage in which the word or its derivations occur from Genesis to Malachi, and he knows as much about it as Gesenius himself—Perhaps more; the spirit of theologism may have blinded the eyes of our learned lexicographer to many an important association with which it was connected in the minds of those divine messengers, whose inspiration he denies, and the fulness of whose terms he therefore can only imperfectly appreciate. Let the same course be pursued with the words for *holiness*, *atonement*, *covenant*, *redemption*, the various terms for the *soul*, the important word *sheol*, the multiplicity of phrases in which the Hebrew is so copious for innate and actual depravity, the sublime and expressive names of the Deity and of the Divine attributes, the terms for *life* and *death* in their temporal and spiritual signification; He will find in the Hebrew Scriptures alone ample means for the most full and satisfactory knowledge of these important words in all these associations, and all their senses, primary, and secondary, and metaphysical.

By such a course, the words become as it were his own. Whenever they occur to the mind, they suggest not only their remembered meanings but the fitness of the associations with which they are connected. He knows the company in which they are found, and at once, without the aid of critical rules, detects the fallacy of any interpretation, which dissociates them from their leading senses. They are no longer *remembered*, but *known* as the words of his native tongue. They pass beyond the province of memory and become a part of the inner property of the mind; giving rise to ideas and emotions, similar to those with which they were connected in the thoughts of David, Solomon and the prophets. He thinks with them and not about them. He may in the exercise of no arrogant spirit rely upon his own judgment, should it differ from that of the rationalising lexicographer; for he has the same, or nearly the same external means of knowledge, whilst he may have far more participation in the spirit which dictated the Scriptures.

By pursuing this course with the more important terms, a vast amount of theological knowledge is acquired, greater perhaps than can be attained in any other way. Volumes on the subject of the atonement, would not produce so distinct and heartfelt an apprehension of this cardinal doctrine of all religion, as the examination of the Hebrew word kaphar in every passage in which it occurs. The perplexing doubts which possess many minds in respect to the subject of a future state as taught in the Old Testament would at once and for ever be dissipated by pursuing the same course with the words sheol and kebher and the various Hebrew terms which are used in connection with them. Light would be shed on many important Greek words in the New Testament, whose meanings vary from the classical usage in consequence of their connection with Hebrew associations and modes of thought. A depth and spirituality of meaning would be discovered in the Old Testament which escapes the notice of the superficial reader. Its claim, to be regarded as a portion of Divine revelation equally important with the new, would be established; notwithstanding the denials of the rationalist, and the concessions which have arisen from the spurious candour of some who are reputed orthodox.

We conclude by earnestly recommending the proposed

work of Professor Nordheimer and Mr. Turner to the attention and patronage of the American clergy. The high reputation of the authors as Hebrew scholars, affords the surest guaranty for the faithful execution of the work. One of them has already secured the confidence of the theological public by his excellent Hebrew Grammar and various articles on Jewish and oriental literature in the leading religious periodicals of the day. The other although less known, is however well known to many, as an indefatigable student of the oriental tongues, and as affording a promise of occupying the highest rank in this department of learning. Those who are aware of the great difficulty of obtaining a Hebrew Concordance in this country, and of the extremely high price which it has heretofore demanded, will regard the terms as far more moderate than could possibly have been expected from the nature of the work. Had they been however, five times as great, every clergyman who means at all to pursue the study of the Hebrew, had better, (if he has no other means to make the purchase,) sacrifice every commentary in his library than be without it.

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ART. IX.—LETTERS TO A SOUTHERNER.

LETTER IX.

*That the peculiar Theology of the New Haven School is a System of Licentious and Infidel Philosophy.*

In the last letter, (p. 557 of this number), I endeavored to prove, by quotations from the Ch. Spec., the organ of that school,—that they teach the following propositions:

1. That the Competent unperverted reason of man is *infallible* and of equal authority with the Bible.

2. That the human understanding is capable of determining what the omniscient God *can* teach and what he *cannot* teach.

3. That we are to interpret the word of God, not by the same rules by which we do any other book, but in such a manner, that it shall never teach any thing contrary to

what are called the dictates of common sense, or the philosophy of common sense.

4. That when a passage will not bear such an interpretation, we are allowed to conclude that it is no part of divine revelation. I wish you to examine all my quotations by the work itself: in general, I have quoted passages of such a length and character, that no ambiguity of meaning is possible. If these propositions are actually taught by these theologians, you will have no doubt, that they overturn the proper authority of the Bible; that whatever truth may make a part of the new theology, it must be received on the authority of reason; that the system itself is nothing more than a scheme of pure rationalism.

I also drew the two following propositions from these writers, which are notoriously a part of their system.

5. That there is no sin or sinfulness in human nature; that it is improper to predicate moral depravity of it at all or of any thing but voluntary acts; i. e., they teach the perfect purity [freedom from moral defilement] of man, and the total depravity of sin.

6. That it is owing to nothing morally bad in the agent himself, that all his acts or volitions are bad, but to something else *in him* which has no more moral quality than his lungs. That is, that man's volitions, even such as are expressed in the worst crimes, are not evidence of any thing bad in man himself: that, let his acts or volitions derive their bad qualities from what source they may, they derive none from the agent himself, and are evidence of nothing bad in the agent.—(I shall endeavor presently to shew that they mean nothing more by the badness of acts than their bad tendency.)

From their general proposition, that all holiness in the Creator,\* and all moral depravity in creatures, consists in voluntary acts, we deduced the propositions, 1. That the holy acts of God are *owing* to no holiness in him, and if they be owing to any cause, must depend for their existence

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\* "It (holiness) is and must be *voluntary action*, the free choice of the agent or it wants that which is essential to the very nature of holiness." Ch. Spec. Vol. 3. p. 473. "A created holiness can bear no more resemblance to the *divine holiness*, which is *voluntary* and uncreated, than does the property of attraction in matter." Ch. Spec. Vol. 3. p. 471.



on something else, which has no moral quality ; consequently, God's acts can express no moral excellence of his nature. (I shall presently attempt to shew from these writers that, to adore God for his moral excellence, is no part of their system.)

2. If all holiness and moral depravity consist in voluntary action, then voluntary action whether holy or sinful can be *owing* to no holiness or moral depravity in the agents, and consequently there can be no moral difference between those beings whom we absurdly call holy and those whom we call sinful.

I intend now to shew by quotations from these writers that they utterly destroy the preceptive part of the law, explain away spiritual religion, sap the foundation of morals, and utterly confound all moral distinctions. I have never conversed with any person, who had made this system a matter of particular study without embracing it, who did not allow, that, to his view, it confounded the distinction between holiness and sin. I think that if I make out the three following propositions from their writings, you will admit that I have proved my point. The three positions are inseparably connected. Had they seemed to teach one and been silent on the others, there might be ground for supposing that they had been misunderstood, unless their language were extremely explicit. But their language is explicit, and explicit on each of the propositions. I design to shew from their writings that they teach,

1. First, that the happiness of the agent is the ultimate end, and self-love the primary cause and only motive, of all voluntary action good and bad.

2. That the tendency of an action to promote the happiness of the agent is the foundation of moral obligation.

3. That all that we mean, by the terms good and bad as applied to actions, is their good or bad tendency ; that aside from this, actions have no moral value whatever.

These propositions all result from the fundamental doctrine of their system, that all sinfulness consists in acts, and that human nature itself is perfectly free from all moral pollution and incapable of it : that is, that there are no dispositions *in* human nature which can be called sinful in the proper sense of that term : i. e. dispositions worthy of the moral disapprobation of God and the possessor.

When we have once decided that there are in human nature, no inherent dispositions at all towards moral objects, the question arises how can man ever choose or refuse these objects, how exercise delight in them or abhorrence towards them as he is commanded? It is plain that we can choose or refuse them only as they tend to gratify some feelings of our nature which have no moral character, and these feelings are comprehended under the term self-love which has been found to have no moral nature: of course we can choose nothing any farther than it tends to gratify this, nor refuse any thing except what has an opposite tendency. We can then choose nothing any farther than it gratifies this self-love, of course we are not *bound* to do it. Self-love becomes the ground of obligation, and the only motive of action; and as all actions agree in being but purposes to gratify this self-love, they differ not in their nature but only in their tendency.

It was always supposed that in virtuous acts men exercise some virtuous disposition towards God, and spiritual objects; that these objects were chosen on account of some excellence in the objects themselves, and not on account of their tendency to gratify an innocent self-love. God requires that the perfections of his character should be themselves the object of an intense moral admiration and delight; this moral complacency in the excellence of the divine character, is *voluntary* in its nature; of course, it is an act of the will, which is a part of our nature. Those moral dispositions, which incline us to delight in those objects, which God has required, or forbidden us to love, are the *heart* or *will*. They who deny with Pelagius, that any sinful dispositions belong to human nature, deny the existence of a sinful heart and will. Volition, on this scheme, cannot be a holy delight in any object on account of some excellent quality which makes it worthy of love; an object can be chosen only on account of its tendency to gratify an innocent self-love; this tendency to promote our happiness can be the only ground on which we can be required to choose it; and actions differ only in their tendency, because they all *agree* in being the choice of objects which gratify self-love, which is the only reason why they are obligatory. If these propositions are a part of that philosophy of common sense according to which we are required to interpret the Bible,

they are manifestly its three principal doctrines. We now, proceed to examine whether they are contained in the writings of the New Haven Theologians.

First. That the happiness of the agent is the ultimate end, and self-love the primary cause and only motive, of all voluntary action whether good or bad.

That the *happiness of the agent* is the *ultimate end* of all voluntary action, and *self-love* the *primary cause* of all acts of preference or choice is plainly taught in the two following passages. "Of all specific voluntary action, the happiness of the agent in some form is the *ultimate end*." This *self-love* or *desire of happiness* is the *primary cause* or *reason* of all acts of preference or choice, which fix supremely on any object." Ch. Spec. Vol. 1, p. 21, 24. I said too, that they teach that self-love is the *motive* of all voluntary action. First that it is the motive of all holiness. "Destroy self-love as some would do, and all the motives to holiness, which the universe presents, would fall on the sinner's heart powerless as water on the rock." Ch. Spec. Vol. 7, p. 658 and 659. Again they say self-love is the motive of *all* voluntary action good or bad, "annihilate self-love throughout the universe of being, and *all voluntary action* must instantly cease; with no desires to gratify, there would be no motive for action." Ch. Spec. Vol. 7, p. 569. Self-love then is the only motive, and the happiness of the agent the ultimate end, in all voluntary action good or bad. The same sentiment appears in the following passage. "The constitutional love of happiness must prompt the agent, or he will never act. This is the spring of all his activity." But Dr. Taylor, the author of this scheme, has most fully developed it in a passage where he explains how the first accountable choice is made, that choice whose character determines that of all succeeding ones. He says, "The being constituted with a capacity for happiness, desires to be happy, and knowing that he is capable of deriving happiness from different objects, considers from which the greatest happiness may be derived; and as in this respect he judges, or estimates their relative value, so he chooses one or the other as his chief good." How does the man estimate the value of these objects? by any *moral quality* or *excellence* in them, which renders either of them worthy of choice? Not at all, but, just as they seem calculated to promote his happiness. "He considers, says Dr. Taylor, from which the greatest happiness may be de-

rived, and as, *in this respect*, he judges or estimates their relative value, so he chooses." He considers not which it is his duty to love and choose, or which has any moral excellence which makes it worthy of choice, he forms no other estimate or conception of their value, than their tendency to promote *his* happiness. On this scheme, a person can have no motive nor end in voluntary action but his own happiness. He estimates the value of the "*chief good*" solely by its tendency to make him happy. "As he judges in this respect" says Dr. Taylor, "so he chooses." Now if the man chooses the wrong object for his chief good, it is only an error in judgment, for "*as he judges so he chooses.*" The right object is best calculated to gratify self-love, for these writers tell us that otherwise it would not be the duty of the agent to choose it: and certainly self-love would prompt a man to choose the object best calculated to gratify this innocent desire of happiness; his sin can be only a mistake.

We have seen that these writers teach that the only motive in all voluntary action good and bad is self-love, and the ultimate end, the happiness of the agent: You may well suppose that those who publish such sentiments, will endeavor to give them an air of plausibility and to keep their utter licentiousness out of sight. In fact, they do pretend to make a distinction in human actions. They teach, that holiness and sin both agree in being a purpose to gratify self-love, but that they differ as to the manner in which it is to be gratified. "Self-love," says one of these writers, "is simply our constitutional desire of happiness. Benevolence and selfishness respect *simply the mode* in which this desire is to be gratified. Selfishness is a purpose to gratify it *at the expense* of the happiness of others, while benevolence is a purpose to gratify it by *promoting the happiness* of others." Ch. Spec. Vol. 7, p. 567. All holiness and sin are crowded into a purpose. When a man commits murder, theft, arson, treason or the blackest crimes, he only purposes to gratify this innocent desire of happiness at the expense of the life, fortunes, or liberty of individuals, or communities, for "selfishness is a purpose to gratify it [self-love or a desire of happiness] at the expense of the happiness of others;" he has in view the only possible ultimate end of all voluntary action: he is incited by the same motive, and purposes the same end, as if he were promoting the happiness of others, for these men tell us, happiness of the agent is the end, and

self-love the motive of all voluntary action. Whether then, a person purposes to promote the happiness of others or to destroy their lives, fortunes and liberties, his end is and must be the same in both cases ; it is not the welfare of those whom he favors, or the injury of those whom he ruins, but only his own happiness : his motives also are the same in both cases, he desires not the happiness of those whom he benefits, or the misery of those whom he makes wretched, but only his own happiness : his only motive is, and must be, an innocent self-love. These are the only possible motives and ends in all acts of choice.

But we often hear these adroit men, after having established these horrid principles, attempting to veil their moral deformity under ambiguous terms and phrases. When you hear them say that "benevolence is a purpose to gratify self-love by promoting the happiness of others," recollect that the self-love which is gratified by promoting the happiness of others, is also gratified at the expense of their happiness ; yes, even by destroying their reputation, their fortune, their liberty, and their lives. "Benevolence says this writer, is a purpose to gratify it [self-love,] by promoting the happiness of others, selfishness is a purpose to gratify it [the self-same self-love] at the expense of the happiness of others." There are no sinful dispositions it seems which belong to human nature, such as envy, malice, hatred, revenge, ambition, pride, covetousness ; the motive to all sinful volitions or acts of choice, is nothing but an *innocent self-love*.

We have already proved that these writers teach, that all holiness even in God himself, consists in voluntary acts ; consequently, God's holy acts are *owing* to no moral goodness or excellence in his nature, and are *evidence* of no such goodness : God, therefore, cannot be loved for any moral excellence of his nature. But this follows more directly from other and plainer statements ; self-love is the motive of all voluntary action, on this scheme, even in God himself. For they say "Annihilate self-love throughout the universe of being and *all* voluntary action must instantly cease ; with no desires to gratify, there would be no motive for action. *God himself* would henceforth set [sit] *inactive* on his throne, to look *coldly* down on a still motionless universe." Ch. Spec. Vol. 7. p. 569. If the constitutional love of happiness be the only possible motive of conduct,

then God does all his holy acts from the same self-love which is gratified by doing evil. But, aside from the fact that on this system, God can possess no perfections which make him worthy of love, if it be true that self-love is the motive of all voluntary action, it is the motive from which God is loved. Certainly the love of God is a voluntary act; it is not a mere innocent feeling, destitute of any moral value. God, then must be loved from self-love, and from the same self-love which finds its gratification in blaspheming him; we must love our neighbor with the same self-love, which is gratified by injuring him; we must love our enemies with the same self-love which is gratified by hating them; we must love our brethren, with the same self-love which is gratified in doing them evil.

Now I ask what is the distinction on this system between right and wrong, virtue and vice, holiness and sin? There is none.—This self-love is as truly gratified at the expense of the happiness of others, as by doing them good. I will repeat a passage which I have quoted before, "Self-love is simply our constitutional desire of happiness. Benevolence and selfishness respect simply the mode in which this [self-same] desire is to be gratified. Selfishness is a purpose to gratify it at the *expense* of the happiness of others, while benevolence is a purpose to gratify it by *promoting* the happiness of others." Now what is a person's motive in selfishness and benevolence? It is that self-love which is gratified either by doing good or evil to others. What is his ultimate end when he does good to others? not their welfare; he has the same ultimate end, these writers assure us, when he does good as when he does evil: and what is it? The happiness of the agent; and the *same kind* of happiness in both cases: the gratification of that self-love which is gratified either by doing good or by doing evil to others.

These men occasionally attempt to cover the impiety of their system by ambiguous expressions, which are capable of a meaning which is not at variance with truth. They are aware, that the sentiments need this protection, which all infidels have adopted. "No it is not mercenary," (says one of them,) "to do right for the sake of the happiness which it brings us." But what happiness do you seek in doing good? the same which is found in doing evil; the gratification of that innocent self-love which can find its gratification in all the crimes which have stained the charac-

ters of the worst men. They speak too of "seeking their happiness by making others happy." But in making others happy, the *motive* is not a *desire* for the happiness of others; for it would be absurd to call a desire for the happiness of others by the name of self-love which is the only motive of action: when therefore they say "seeking their happiness by making others happy," they mean seeking the gratification of that innocent self-love; which is gratified likewise by making others miserable.

But they tell us, that some persons have been enabled to discover, that this self-love, which finds its gratification even in theft, robbery, arson, murder, parricide, treason and blasphemy against God, will find still more gratification in loving God and doing good to others; that after making this discovery, they have for this sole reason, formed the purpose to gratify it in loving God and blessing his creatures, instead of rebelling against him and injuring their fellow beings; that this purpose is benevolence, and constitutes the man a Christian. If this be so, and if not a particle of the old purpose to gratify self-love in the opposite way remains, we do not see but this new purpose constitutes absolute perfection in holiness: we see then what they mean by the special influences of the Holy Spirit in regeneration and sanctification: they enable the person to form the purpose to gratify that self-love which had hitherto been gratified by all kinds of sin, and to gratify it by loving God and doing good to men. Now I ask if it is any merit in these men that they hold the doctrines of grace, if they thus turn the grace of God into licentiousness?

Here then is the first doctrine of that philosophy of common sense, according to which we are to interpret the Bible, and by which we are to settle the sacred canon. And yet these men have the face to charge the doctrines of original sin and regeneration, as hitherto held by the church of God, as leading to all manner of licentious consequences. But be assured, they have not endeavored to set up the authority of reason and to overthrow the authority of the word of God in matters of faith, without reason. They were opening the way for the propagation of some doctrines which needed such preparation. We will now proceed to establish the next proposition. That the tendency of an action to promote the happiness of the agent is the foundation of moral obligation.



You will readily perceive, that if the happiness of the agent, be the only ground of obligation, then he is bound only to himself; he is bound to make himself as happy as possible: moral obligation therefore has its origin and end in the being himself. Then moral obligation might exist just as perfectly were there no God and no other being in the universe than the agent himself. His sources of happiness would indeed be fewer, and his relations less extensive, but moral obligation will still exist. But the being would be bound to no one but to himself. This is the doctrine which the writers of the New Haven school have advanced; that man is bound only to himself; that obligation does not suppose a God *to* whom we are bound; that it may exist in the scheme of the atheist, as well as that of the christian; that we are bound to obey a rule which would have force were there no God; and that the additional authority which God gives to this rule, is only the proof which his declarations afford, that we can find more gratification for an innocent self-love in virtue, than we can in vice.

We have always thought it a dangerous position, that moral obligation has not its foundation in the will of a God who is necessarily and immutably holy. But says a crafty objector, do virtue and vice depend on arbitrary will, so that if vice were commanded, it would become duty and virtue? But the will of a God who is eternal and necessarily and immutably holy, is not *arbitrary*. Can moral obligation exist on the scheme of the atheist? First as to its matter, or the substance of the Divine law, which comprehends all duty. Obligation respects God and his creatures; it requires perfect love to his immutable perfections and love to his creatures. Men are bound *by* this law, not *to* themselves, but *to* God, to whom they are truly responsible. God alone can give the sense of obligation; it can exist only in his creatures. Moral obligation then supposes obligation and responsibility towards him, and obligation towards our neighbor only because we are responsible to God. If moral obligation is eternal and immutable, it is because God, who has required us to love his perfections is immutable and eternal, and we can conceive no obligation independent of a God whom we are to love and obey. This love and obedience must be founded in the will of him who commands, in a will, not arbitrary, but founded in necessary and immutable holiness. Obligation in created beings, supposes

some one to whom the being is bound ; it cannot exist without a God. It supposes duties which can be performed only towards him and his creatures. It can be conceived only by those whom God has formed, and it is wholly apprehended by a peculiar power which he has created. If then obligation is eternal, it is because that God is so ; it cannot exist independent of him. But the obligation which these men teach, may well exist without any God, and we are not sorry that they have not ventured to seek its foundation in his will.

The doctrine of this school is, that a man is bound to seek the gratification of this innocent self-love from those objects or courses of action which give it the most gratification and this tendency of the act or course of action constitutes it virtuous, and is the only evidence the agent has of the fact : that this obligation would exist, were there no moral Governor : that the will of God in no sense lays the foundation of moral obligation, but is only an additional evidence to the creature that a certain course called virtue really gives more gratification to this innocent self-love, than another called vice. I now proceed to the proof. First. " We have seen, that moral obligation can exist without a moral governor. Of course, the will of a superior cannot be the ultimate foundation of obligation." Ch. Spec. Vol. 10. p. 536. Again, " Does any one hold that the will of God is the foundation of moral obligation, we shew, that this, when carefully examined can mean nothing more than the objective ground, or *the indication or proof to us, WHEREIN* our true welfare [not duty] lies, so as to supply our defect of knowledge." Ch. Spec. Vol. 10. p. 543. The will of God, then, only supplies any defect of evidence that the agent might have, as to that wherein his true welfare lies, whether in virtue or vice, i. e. that what is called virtue, gives more gratification to his innocent self-love than vice.

But you would suppose, that persons who teach that moral obligation is eternal and may even exist independent of the existence of a God, you would suppose that they believed in certain unchangeable qualities in actions : but they teach, that the only quality which renders an act right, is its tendency to make the individual agent himself happy. This writer just quoted makes the supposition that there were but one being in the universe, and that he were either finite or infinite ; he then enquires how that being would judge of

the quality of actions ; Do you suppose by any immutable distinctions in the actions themselves ? No. But simply by the tendency he could discover in the acts, to make him happy. The one in which he saw the greatest or most direct tendency to this end, he would infer to be right, the other wrong. Observe the being is not to enquire which action is right *in its own nature*, for there is no such thing distinct from the tendency to make the man happy ; had there been, he would have made the being enquire for it ; he, only enquires which has this tendency in the greatest degree and this gives him the assurance that the action is right ; here moral obligation fastens on him. "Let it be supposed" says this writer "that there was but a single rational being in the whole universe. No matter now whether finite or infinite ; but he is a free moral agent. We ask would there not be a right and a wrong in respect to the acts of such a being ? What would be duty with regard to himself ? . . . What does common sense decide that he ought to do. It seems to us clear, that so far as he has any knowledge of the tendency of his actions, so far as he could discern the bearing of surrounding objects, he *should* seek to be as happy as possible ; were a specific cause of action known to be productive of injury to himself, to lessen his enjoyment, is there one of our readers who would not say, that such a being would do wrong, that his conscience would reproach him, should he throw away so much of his happiness, should he choose a less rather than a greater good ? *The bond of obligation fastens upon him precisely at this point of his highest good.* The only rule which is existing in this case,—*the end*, the perfection of his being,—is, *to procure all the happiness within his reach.*" Ch. Spec. Vol. 10. p. 531. Now had the writer believed in any difference in actions as right or wrong, distinct from their tendency to make the agent happy, he would have made the being enquire for this, instead of examining which action would make him most happy.

Here this writer goes to the bottom of the matter and places moral obligation on its true basis. As there is no God and no other being than himself ; you will see that the tendency of an action to what is called the general good has no part in constituting an act virtuous ; it must be the tendency to promote the happiness of the agent and only that. He simulates this agent for this very purpose to come at the sim-

ple foundation: Would not there be a right and wrong to such an agent, he asks. Yes, and what would constitute the right or wrong? "Were a specific course of action known to be productive of injury to himself" says the writer, "is there one of our readers who would not say that such a being would do wrong should he choose a less rather than a greater good?" The choosing what has the least tendency to gratify self-love *constitutes* the act wrong. What rule would he violate. He tells us, "*the only rule existing in this case . . . IS TO PROCURE ALL THE HAPPINESS WITHIN HIS REACH.*" Here then is the eternal and immutable law by which right and wrong are determined. The writer, after making a few additional remarks on this supposed case, makes the following deduction. "Here then we may clearly see, that a foundation of obligation exists,—a right and a wrong irrespective of authority and government, or the will of a lawgiver; and no force of authority can create obligation." p. 532.

Again on p. 530. This writer observes "give it what name we please—call it self-love, susceptibility to pleasure, the constitutional love of happiness, or any thing else, yet this is the ultimate feeling in the operation of which the bond is fastened in the subject of moral obligation, and the true ultimate foundation of moral obligation is the tendency of an action to promote the highest happiness of an agent, by promoting the highest welfare of all." We have just seen that he makes the tendency of an action to promote the happiness of the agent irrespective of the good or even the existence of others, the true ground, as we might prove from many other quotations. The reason why we are to seek the gratification of this innocent self-love in promoting the highest happiness of others instead of doing them evil is, that the first course gives rather more gratification to this principle than the last. The writer tells us, that God claims obedience to his law on the principle "that it is the surest way of making us most happy." p. 538.

Now if an immutably holy God has not a right to require of his own creature, that he should love his holiness and moral excellence, if moral obligation exist independent of the will and even the existence of Jehovah, I ask what allegiance do men owe him? what claim has he in obedience? If the obligation to obedience do not originate in God's will, what right has he to require it? Wherefore

then serveth the law, if the obligation and matter of duty equally subsist, on the scheme of the atheist though the relations of the agent be not so extensive. Wherefore then serveth the law? It is merely a "*declaration*" of God "*in the form of law*" that a certain course, which is duty irrespective of his will or even existence, that such a course "is the surest way of making us most happy," that is, that it is rather better calculated to gratify an innocent self-love than the opposite course: and for what is the person to reproach himself, who seeks the gratification of this self-love the wrong way? Shall he reproach himself for *disobeying* God or merely *disbelieving* him? Let this writer speak on these subjects.

On p. 538, he has the following observations. "This however is quite a different thing from saying that the will of God *creates* this obligation or that its *foundation* is in the will of God. On what ground is obedience claimed? . . . The very reason which God assigns is that it [his law] is *good*—that it is the surest way of making us most happy. His *declaration in the form of his law* [not his requisition] is the highest evidence which we have of the fact." His declaration you will observe is evidence not of the rectitude of a given course, but of its tendency to make us happy. He continues, "Men do not distinguish between God's competency to *discern* and to *make known* to us the way of happiness, and his creating a particular line of conduct right or wrong." God's competency to make known to us the best way to gratify self-love, constitutes his whole claim to our allegiance, and when we do not follow his advice we are to reproach ourselves only for rejecting evidence, not for disobedience. We are guilty and self-condemned, the writer adds, "because we *reject the highest evidence in the case* making known the right and wrong, not because God has, by his own will, made this or that action to be right or wrong." As to the principles of human accountability we regard this writer as coinciding, with no important difference, with the atheist.

Our third proposition, that actions differ not in their *nature* but only in their *tendency* needs little support, after what has been said. We have already seen, that the tendency of an action to promote the happiness of the agent *makes* it duty, and of course, it is evidence and the only one, that it is right. On this point, however, it is immaterial whether the tendency which *constitutes* the act right, be to the good of the agent or to the general good. If this ten-

dency be all that is meant by *right* and *wrong*, and there be no such things as these qualities distinct from it, then, could the tendency of actions in a system be reversed, right and wrong too would be reversed. "When we say a thing is right because it is productive of the greatest amount of happiness," says one of these writers "all we mean is, that its tendency to produce the greatest amount of happiness is **WHAT MAKES OR CONSTITUTES IT RIGHT.**" Ch. Spec. Vol. 7. p. 605. Again page 616., the same writer opposes another who advanced the position that actions differ, not only in their *tendency*, but also in their *nature*, in the following words, "of course it would seem, that there can be no such thing as having pleasure in moral piety of moral agents in and for itself, as well as on account of its being essentially conducive to the happiness of his creation: since the **ONLY VALUE** it can possess is by its essentially promoting the highest good of all."

Here, then, we have the doctrines that virtue is only a purpose to gratify self-love in a given course which gives self-love rather more gratification than vice: that this is the only reason why virtue is a duty and not that the creature is under obligations to the *Creator* to possess even this species of piety. This system annihilates the law of God, the distinctions between right and wrong, and the bond of allegiance of the creature to his Creator. Yet this infidel scheme is dignified by the name of the philosophy of common sense; by this we are required to interpret the scriptures, and in opposition to it, even the omniscient God is not to be heard for a moment. It emanates too from one of our most important institutions, the foundations of whose departments of instruction are more jealously guarded than any before known; it is taught also in various colleges and theological seminaries in our country, and so general is the indifference, the timidity or a temporizing spirit amongst the orthodox, that, in most parts of New England, it is more dangerous to oppose than to teach these impieties.

There is indeed one reason for this, in the peculiar extra-ecclesiastical government which at present prevails amongst the churches of New England. Those Churches, so jealous of bestowing on any body within themselves, sufficient power, for their own preservation; which have in some states, long since refused to admit any real mutual responsibility to each other for purity of doctrine, have

nevertheless bestowed in fact on a few small executive committees, who owe them no direct responsibility whatever, the power of determining who shall come forward to the ministry and succeed the present pastors in the churches, and deciding who shall be sent to the heathen and who supply the destitute and waste places in this country. Our great benevolent societies embrace almost every prominent individual in New England in the Church and out of it, as members and patrons, while their executive officers, consisting of a very small number of individuals, and owing but a very indirect responsibility to the society at large, wield all the substantial power and patronage of these institutions. It is supposed by many of the orthodox clergy, that it is a settled policy on the part of those who wield the power in bodies, to treat the theological differences which exist, as of no importance, if not to shew peculiar favor to the new Theology; and the weight of this patronage has deterred those who detested these errors, from making a decided and public opposition to them. It might be a declaration, that these bodies were educating or sending abroad heretics.

We will take the liberty to say a word or two in relation to this subject. These Societies for education and domestic and foreign missions were organized to raise up and locate pious and evangelical men: this is a part of their constitution. It is for this purpose, and by this profession, that they raise monies which are contributed by the industrious, the poor, and often the needy, for the advancement of the kingdom of their Saviour. We say, then, that in case these men have applied or shall in future intelligently apply, the funds thus raised, to educate or locate in this, or in foreign countries, men who teach the above Pelagian and infidel system, that they have perverted these funds to a far greater degree, than though they had applied them to their own private use. If the laws pronounce it a crime to obtain money under false pretences, what name must be given to a general and systematic application of money raised for the spread of the gospel, to raise up and pay men who shall overturn it.

But the propositions which I have noticed are built on a system of moral agency and the necessary result of it. If you will have patience for seven or eight pages more, I will examine the system of these men, and endeavor to shew, that their reasonings are absurd as their conclusions are iniquitous.



## ART. X.—LETTERS TO A SOUTHERNER.

## LETTER X.

*That the peculiar Theology of the New Haven School is a System of Licentious and Infidel Philosophy.*

That system of philosophy which necessarily leads to the conclusions that actions differ not in nature, but only in tendency ; that man is bound to seek the gratification of his innocent desires in promoting the happiness of others, rather than at the expense of it, that is, that he is bound to seek this gratification in loving God and choosing his glory and the temporal and spiritual welfare of others, rather than in vice and the blackest villainies, only because the first give more gratification to these desires than the last ;—that this obligation exists independent of the will and authority of God, and that his law is only a declaration which informs us more certainly that our true welfare lies in virtue, such a system must necessarily deserve examination.

You are aware, that it is the doctrine of Calvinists, that there is in man a will which possesses a permanent sinful bias ; or, in other words, sinful moral dispositions, which constitute the moral character of the impenitent ; that it is in virtue of these moral dispositions, that the impenitent always choose sinful objects ; that is, such objects as it is sinful to choose. You are aware also, that Pelagians deny the existence of any such innate depravity, sinful dispositions or sinful bias in the will ; that they teach that man comes into the world, with no dispositions at all towards moral objects : that he possesses a self-determining power in the will by which, when different objects are before him, he can incline himself to either ; especially that when holy or sinful objects (i. e. such objects as it is a duty or a sin to choose) are before him, that it is by this self-determining power, and not through any bias inherent in his will, that he chooses the one or the other.

The early Pelagians did not confound moral distinctions, in order to give this innocent being power to choose between moral objects, or to choose them at all. But the Pelagians

of the present time, have introduced the doctrine of innocent desires, which however fasten on moral objects, and give them their whole power to affect us, (by which, as we shall see they confound the distinction of virtue and vice) and after all, have found themselves under the necessity of calling in to their aid, the old ally of Pelagianism, the self-determining power of the will. The old Pelagianism of New England was purity itself compared to the present.

You must be aware, that those who deny any inherent moral dispositions towards moral objects, and also pretend to deny a self-determining power in the will, by which it can put itself out of a state of indifference towards either of several moral objects; i. e. can choose either as it pleases—that they need some means by which man shall become otherwise than indifferent towards these objects: This is accomplished by means of innocent constitutional desires, which fasten on the objects to be chosen, and put the mind out of a state of indifference towards them or make them *desirable* before they are chosen.

Within a few years, the new metaphysicians have changed the meaning of the three principal terms used by Edwards, viz. *the will, motive and volition*, and by this means, charge that great man with absurdity and fatalism, as if a person were to change Euclid's definitions, and then boast of refuting him. This I will now attempt to shew.

First, Edwards defines motive to be "something that is extant in the view or apprehension of the understanding," the Ch. Spec. says that desires are motives; that the desire of happiness, is the motive of all voluntary action, and a writer in the last Oct. No. of Bib. Rep. uses it in this sense; he says, "How then is the fatalist to prove that motive or desire is the producing cause?"

Edwards makes desire and volition so far synonymous that desire is a volition for an absent object; volition the choice of one either present or absent; these writers deny that desires are volitions; they make them the *motives* only of volition, as was just observed, while at the same time, they teach, that they fix on the same object as volition. "Every one knows he never chooses an *object* without *first* desiring it." Ch. Spec. Vol. 7. p. 565. The writer just quoted in the Bib. Rep. p. 402., "and yet it leaves to man full power to choose either the *one* or the *other* of the *objects of desire*, which God presents," thus making the object of de-

sire and of choice the same : he also says, p. 392. " If there are any acts of mind clearly distinct and different, they are desires and volitions."

But they also teach, that these desires are necessary to put the mind out of a state of indifference towards moral objects before such objects can be chosen. " Every one knows," says a writer just quoted, " he never chooses an object without first desiring it ; for to choose without desiring it, would be to choose either from indifference or from aversion, which we know we never do. Ch. Spec. Vol. 7. p. 565. You see why these innocent desires towards moral objects are introduced ; they are necessary to make the mind otherwise than *indifferent* towards moral objects before choice, which state of mind has heretofore been called choice. But the doctrine too is, that choice itself is an act of the mind, *in which* we are *indifferent* towards the object of choice ; " for" says this writer " to choose without desiring it would be *to choose from indifference* ;" that is, the act of choice does not signify a state of mind in which we are otherwise than indifferent towards the objects ; if we did not first desire the object, we should be indifferent towards it *in* the act of choice ; " and we know" he adds " we never could choose that to which we are perfectly indifferent ;" therefore as choice implies not a state of mind in which we delight in the object or prefer it, or are otherwise than indifferent towards it, we must *first* desire it. The necessity of these innocent desires is caused, then, by denying any such thing as we have been accustomed to understand by the word choice or preference.

These men deny that choice is a moral pleasure or delight in such objects, as it is duty or sin to choose ; and this is absolutely necessary to their system. For, if volition should mean an act of inward moral delight in the objects of choice, then as volition is an act of the will, which is a part of our nature, this will would be nothing more nor less than an inherent moral disposition towards moral objects. Volition too, being an act of the will, it would follow that without such an inherent disposition towards moral objects as we understand by the will, there could be no moral delight whatever in such objects. And as this must be a disposition to delight in either such objects as it is duty or such as it is sin to delight in, it must be a holy or sinful heart, or a will with an inherent holy or sinful bias.

By desire, the writers on this scheme do not mean merely an emotion towards an absent object, but an inward affection towards every object about to be chosen, whether present or absent. If, then, by desire they mean an inward affection towards the objects chosen, as volition is regarded by them as distinct from desire, this can mean no such affection towards the object chosen. Choice, then, cannot mean a moral delight in any moral quality or excellence of an object, which, to our view, renders it worthy of choice: an object must be chosen simply as a means of gratifying the innocent constitutional desires. These innocent desires, the writer in the Bib. Rep. just quoted, and those of the Ch. Spec. assure us, are the invariable antecedents and *motives*, of all acts of choice.

If when I speak of choosing an object, I mean not an act of moral delight in some moral quality of the object, which, to my mind makes it appear worthy of choice and which we generally express by the word desire, then, in this act, I may be wholly indifferent towards the objects chosen; I choose it solely as a means of gratifying some innocent constitutional desire. But this is absurd. When I say I choose the injury rather than the good of an enemy, if I mean, that, in this act of choosing his injury, I do not in the least desire it, I am really indifferent towards it. On this scheme, where desire is distinct from volition, when I deliberate between the good or evil of an enemy, I only decide by the act of choice which constitutional desire shall be gratified, whether that which fixes on the injury of this enemy or that which fixes on his welfare. This is the sense in which the writer in the Bib. Repository uses the word volition. He defines the will, to be "the power which the mind has to choose which of several co-existing desires shall be gratified." This is evidently giving the term "the will," a different signification from what it has in the writings of Edwards. Choice, in this writer's scheme, means nothing more than choosing which of several innocent but worthless desires, shall be gratified.

As there are no moral dispositions in a moral agent towards either holy or sinful objects, (I mean objects which it is a duty or sin to choose); which dispositions constitute the agent either a holy or a sinful being; and as there are no moral qualities in the objects to be chosen, which make either class of them appear worthy of choice to the agent,

according as he is holy or sinful : and as these moral objects must nevertheless be chosen, these writers have taught us that the agent has certain constitutional innocent desires, which fix on either class of objects ; that this makes them to appear desirable ; then, after these desires have given the person some inward innocent affection for the object to be chosen, after they have put the mind out of a state of indifference towards it, then forsooth the man is able to choose it.

The writers in the Ch. Spec. class all the desires under the term constitutional desire of happiness and teach that we can choose objects only as they gratify this desire : the writer in the Bib. Rep. just quoted is obliged to keep up the distinction between specific desires and the general desire of happiness in order to maintain the particular position which he attempts to establish, namely—that we can choose in opposition to the strongest specific desire. But, he says, p. 387 and 388. “ But there are cases when the mind is excited by a strong desire for some specific good either present or future, which reason perceives to involve more evil and less good than another course. In such cases, there is a conflict between the *generic desire* for happiness, and the *specific desire for some particular good*.” In all other cases, where the strongest desire coincides with what is regarded as duty, he tell us, that the person always chooses to gratify the strongest desire ; but in those above mentioned, he informs us, that he can choose to gratify either the strongest specific desire or the general desire of happiness, which is also constitutional, but which cannot properly be called strong or weak. This is the position that he means to support as evidence that man is a free agent ; but in either case, the mind chooses that which seems best calculated, in view of the agent, to gratify the constitutional desire of happiness, whether it be called *generic* or *specific* : it chooses that, and only that, which seems best calculated to gratify either a generic or a specific innocent constitutional desire which has no moral nature, more than the sensual appetites. He coincides with the New Haven School in the position, that we choose moral objects, only as they seem adapted to gratify specific constitutional desires or the constitutional desire of happiness ; we can only choose which of these worthless desires we will gratify.

On this scheme, desires, which are not merely emotions in view of future or absent objects, but inward affections for

moral objects themselves, are all innocent. In this case, though I desire the injury of my neighbor ever so ardently, yet if I see so much danger in his power or influence, that I do not choose to gratify that *innocent* desire, I can feel no self reproach. Since desire and choice always fix on the same object, it is always innocent to desire with the utmost vehemence, what it is sinful to choose. Such a doctrine will soon make the common people great metaphysicians; few are so dull as not to be able to distinguish between desire and choice.

It is perfectly innocent, then to desire the ruin of an enemy, the downfall of a rival, the death of a wife, or parent, the injury of a Christian brother, or of the Church, provided we do not choose to gratify such *innocent* desires. There is no harm in desiring wealth, honors, fame on *their own account*; a man may desire, with the utmost vehemence, his neighbor's wife, his house, his man-servant, or his maid-servant, his ox or his ass, or any thing that is his neighbor's, provided he do not see it expedient to gratify these *innocent desires*. On the contrary, it is no virtue to desire the glory of God, the temporal or spiritual good of our neighbor, the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom, a better and heavenly country; we must also choose these objects.

On this system, when I choose the injury of my neighbor, either in theft, robbery, arson, or murder, I choose it only as it tends to gratify some innocent constitutional desire; the same may be said when I choose his good, in acts of beneficence. When a blasphemer utters his horrid sentiments, he chooses only the gratification of innocent desires; when a persecutor chooses the injury of the Church, in any kind of crime, he chooses that, which it is perfectly innocent to desire: The worst persecutor of the Church, and its warmest friend, choose its good or its evil, only as they see the one or the other best adapted to gratify their innocent constitutional desires. If an act of love to God which is the principle of all virtue, be a voluntary act, then the blessed God is loved from the same innocent desires or motives from which he is blasphemed.

On this scheme, all that a moral agent can do, is to choose which morally worthless desire he will gratify. Holy objects, (that is, such objects as it is a virtue to choose) are chosen not on account of any moral excellence in the object chosen, but simply on account of a superior tendency of the

object to gratify some specific desire, or the general desire of happiness. Now, unless holy objects have a tendency to gratify these constitutional desires superior to that which sinful objects possess, then it would seem to be cruel in God, to require of the whole universe, invariably to choose one class of objects, when their happiness would be best secured by choosing a different one. If beings were insulated from each other, virtue would, in every instance, involve a sacrifice of happiness to the agent. And even if they were in society, the constant sacrifice which virtue would cost, would not be compensated by a few acts of beneficence experienced from each other. Perhaps in every instance, the sacrifice of the giver would about balance the increased enjoyment of the receiver.

Besides such choice would be impossible on this scheme. Dr. Taylor teaches that *as the person judges* of the tendency of an object to promote his happiness, *so he chooses*; and the writer in the Repository asserts, that in the case where a person has power to choose contrary to the stronger specific desire, he nevertheless chooses what seems most congenial to the generic desire of happiness. As then it would be impossible to choose the objects least congenial with these innocent desires, a God of wisdom and justice could not require it. Holy objects, then, must possess a greater tendency to gratify these innocent desires than sinful ones. And this we will shew, must, on this system of moral agency, actually be the very reason why God requires that they should be chosen.

For these men teach that even in virtue, men only choose which worthless constitutional desire they will gratify; they choose holy objects merely as means of gratifying these inherent desires, and not because there are moral qualities in the objects themselves which render them worthy of choice. It is on this account then that God requires they should be chosen. The same is true of sinful objects. These are never chosen on account of any moral qualities in the objects themselves which make them appear worthy of choice to the sinful, but which really make them unworthy of being chosen by an accountable being; they are always chosen on this system, simply as means of gratifying innocent desires which fix on them. It cannot be then that sinful objects are forbidden on account of any moral qualities inherent in them. God consequently does not require men to choose



one class of objects rather than another on account of any moral difference in the objects themselves, but simply on account of another difference, the difference which the objects have, in their tendency to gratify these innocent desires. The superior tendency of objects to promote the happiness of the agent is the ground on which God requires them to be chosen and the foundation of obligation. Virtue becomes virtue on account of its tendency to promote this end, and not on account of any radical difference which distinguishes its nature from that of vice. Men's motives and ultimate end, both in virtue and vice, become the same on this Pelagian scheme of moral agency. It is only the gratification of innocent constitutional desires. The happiness of the agent is the ground of obligation, and actions differ not in their nature, but only in their tendency.

Choice has always been regarded as an act of moral delight in a moral object. The object whether holy or sinful is chosen on its own account not as a gratification of mere constitutional desires. Whether the object chosen be holy or sinful (i. e. such as it is duty or sin to choose) it is chosen on account of some moral quality which makes it to appear worthy of choice to the moral agent, according as he is holy or sinful. But this Pelagian scheme which denies the existence of any opposite moral qualities or dispositions in agents, distinct from acts, also denies that there are any opposite moral qualities in the objects to be chosen: a sinner may as well choose a holy object as a sinful one provided he can but see that it is best calculated to gratify his constitutional desires. Besides on this system the mind must first have some affection towards the object to be chosen, and be no longer indifferent towards it, *before* it can choose it at all. Certainly such an act is not choice.

But I observed, that these theologians, after destroying moral distinctions by these constitutional desires, are obliged to resort to the old ally of Pelagianism, the self-determining power of the will, in order to complete their scheme. The writer in the Bib. Repos. whom I have quoted, covertly attempts to fix on Pres. Edwards, and those of his views, the charge of fatalism, for affirming that the strongest motive determines the will. As he has advanced the popular doctrine of the power of contrary choice, I propose very briefly to examine his argument in favor of what he calls free agency. He is attempting to prove, in opposition to Ed-

wards, that the strongest motive does not determine the will. I have already remarked that he defines desire to be motive though Edwards defined it to be volition. "But what is the evidence," says he, "offered by the fatalist to prove that the desire which the mind chooses to gratify is the strongest?" p. 395. On p. 389, he thus states the position which he is to prove. "And free agency is to be proved by establishing the fact, that there is no invariable antecedent of volition, but that the mind some times chooses to gratify one class of desires, and some times another. Here then, is the tug of war, *Hic labor, hoc apud est.*" Let us now see what he accomplishes after such a flourish.

First, I remark that all the free agency for which he contends, is that the mind has power to choose which worthless constitutional desire it will gratify.

Second. He wishes to establish the point that a person has complete freedom, provided he have power to gratify any other than the strongest desire. That is, provided I can actually prefer the glory of God to my own, when at the same time, I desire my own glory perhaps incomparably more than that of God, then I am free, and do a virtuous act.

Third. You will observe, if you look at his proposition, that he is to prove "that there is no invariable antecedent to volition;" but on page 396 he says, "every one allows that motives of some sort are invariable antecedents of volition;" then, on his own ground, the strongest desire is the invariable antecedent of volition, even if it be not gratified. But if he thinks that this last circumstance of its not being gratified a sufficient exception, I add, that the desire which the mind actually chooses to gratify, even though it be the weaker, must yet be an invariable antecedent of volition: which by his definition, destroys free agency as effectually as though it were the strongest.

4. This writer, and most others of late, have confounded two quite distinct questions. He was to prove, that the mind, and not the motive decides which object shall be chosen, or which desire shall be gratified; that is, that one particular object shall be chosen rather than another, and not that the mind is the producing cause of acts of volition in general. All admit that it is the mind, and not something else, which chooses an object; but we contend, that in being the producing cause of volition, it exercises all its activity in the act of volition; that there is no previous activity,

which causes that volition shall come to pass. The mind is the producing cause of volition in the same sense that it is of desire : it is the mind that desires, and the mind that wills. Desire and volition, on this scheme, are two distinct emotions of the mind, towards the same object. The writer allows that the object produces the act of desire : and it does it, from the fact that we possess inherent feelings called desires and not because we choose that it should do this. In the same way, the same object produces volition, from the circumstance that we possess a will, or the power of choosing ; and not because we previously choose that it should have this effect. If it be the agent who causes the volition to take place by any previous voluntary activity, we have the absurdity of volition excited by previous volition ; if the agent exert no such activity, the object must be the producing cause of volition.

It is objected, that the actings of inherent moral dispositions, or of a will with a permanently holy or sinful bias, cannot be free, because the will could have no power to *cause* or *prevent* these acts, which must take place when the appropriate objects of them are before the mind ; that is, that the acts of the will cannot be free, unless the will have a control over them. We see that these writers do not succeed in proving that the will has any such power over its acts, and we know that it is a dictate of common sense, that free acts must be free *in their own nature* and not in consequence of being under the control of the will.

5 But the writer was to prove, that the mind itself determines not merely that some object shall be chosen, but that some *one* shall be chosen rather than *another* ; that it has power to choose which desire it will gratify. This implies election. If the mind determines that one object shall be chosen rather than another, it must do it voluntarily, or there is no freedom in such determination ; but if it do it by previous choice, we have one volition determined by another, and an endless series of necessary volitions. But he asserts this absurdity in plain terms or his words have no meaning. He says that the mind, sometimes *chooses to gratify* one class of desires and sometimes another ; also that the will is "the power which the mind has to *choose* which of several co-existing desires shall be gratified:" but we do not choose one of several co-existing desires, but one of several objects. Now, when he says the will is the power which the mind has of choosing which of several co-existing desires shall be gratified, he must either mean that the will is the power which the mind has to choose which of several objects it will choose, which is the old Arminian doctrine of self-determination, or else the sentence remains incomplete and stands thus ; "the will is the power which the mind has of choosing which of several objects——"

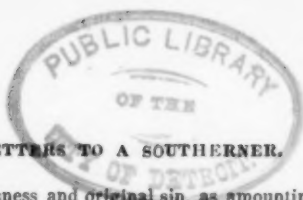
The mind may be called the producing cause of volition, if by this phrase, we mean only that it is the mind, and not something else, which

wills: but if it be meant, that the mind decides, that that object shall be chosen in preference to this, or this in preference to that; that is, if the mind decide that one volition shall take place in preference to another, the proposition is an acknowledged absurdity; and it remains, that the superior adaptedness of one object above another to move the will, and not the mind itself decides which object shall be chosen, i. e. which volition shall take place.

His proposition that the mind chooses which desire it will gratify can mean nothing else than that it chooses which object it will choose. As the Pelagian moral agent has no moral dispositions towards moral objects, these constitutional desires were introduced to give the mind some affection for these objects previous to his choosing them. Of what use, then, is choice, or what is meant by that term? I answer, lest it should be supposed that these desires efficiently determine the will, the power of choice, or contrary choice is introduced to secure free agency. In choice, the agent only chooses which object of constitutional desire he will choose.

There are several other absurd consequences, resulting from this doctrine of free agency which I have not time to notice.

If there be no superior moral excellence in that class of moral objects, which God requires men to choose, above that class which he forbids them to choose, i. e. such a moral excellence as makes the one worthy of choice and the other of rejection, then God has not required men to choose the one and refuse the other on this account. He requires them then to choose these objects, not on account of any excellence which makes them worthy of choice, but solely as means of gratifying innocent constitutional desires. Then if there be no moral difference in the objects, and if God is benevolent, he must have commanded them to choose the class which best gratifies these desires; and men need no other regeneration than light enough to see that the class which he requires them to choose gives the most happiness to these desires: or if God has required them to choose what is the least congenial to their feelings, then a mistake as to the tendency of these objects would make regeneration unnecessary; otherwise they could never choose the right ones, without a change in their constitutional affections. If God requires men to choose one class of objects in preference to another, not on account of any moral worth in the objects themselves, but only on account of their tendency best to gratify innocent desires, then the happiness of the agent is the ground of moral obligation and the ultimate end of all moral action good or bad; and self-love the only motive of human conduct, both of vice and virtue. Then a person seeks the good or the ruin of his neighbor, the glory of God or his own glory from the very same motives, only as a means of gratifying innocent constitutional feelings; then, too, holy volitions are owing to no holy dispositions towards holy objects, and sinful volitions to no sinfulness in the agent; holy or sinful acts are evidence of no moral qualities in the agent; it becomes utterly absurd to predicate holiness or sinfulness of agents themselves, since their opposite acts are evidence of no opposite moral qualities; but are owing to something else in them which has no moral character more than their lungs, but which determines the moral character of their acts as certainly as a holy or sinful heart: then there being no moral difference in moral agents, regeneration cannot be a moral change; on this scheme, too, the agent must be otherwise than indifferent towards the object of choice *before* he chooses it. But the human conscience pronounces the inherent dispositions of mankind towards moral objects to be of a moral nature, as well as actual volitions, and the New Haven metaphysicians by denying this first truth, have confounded all moral distinction in human actions. The influence of this system on the piety of the church and the morals of the community is already apparent. Yet these men censure the doctrines



of original righteousness and original sin, as amounting to fatalism. I will spend a moment in examining their objections. We believe that there is a radical difference, an opposition even between holy objects and sinful ones. That holy objects, as the moral perfections of Jehovah etc. possess moral qualities which make them appear worthy of choice or voluntary affection, not in virtue of the agent's possessing innocent constitutional desires, but only as he possesses holy dispositions, some holiness back of acts; and the same may be affirmed of sinful objects. There is a radical moral difference between holy beings themselves and sinful ones. But it is said, if this be true, there can be no true activity in the agent; for holy objects produce in him holy volitions when before his mind, just as fire produces in him the sensation of heat, when he is near it. But if these objects produce the very volitions required and the only ones conceivable, the person exercises all the activity required, or conceivable. He exercises the activity in the act itself, and not in causing it to take place. Is it said such an act cannot be free? But if it be the act required, a volition or act of the will, it is free in *its own nature*; and it matters not how it is caused. It has its freedom in itself and borrows none from its cause.

But it is said, if this be so, a holy being cannot help having holy volitions, or a sinful being, sinful volitions in view of moral objects. But then it is owing to his inherent holiness, that the one has holy volitions, and to his inherent sinfulness, that the other has sinful volitions: and can it be supposed that God would approve of acts flowing from any other source, that he would approve of acts which were owing to no moral qualities in the agent, and evidence of no such qualities in him. I had intended to remark at some length on the influence of the new theology in teaching that all the innate affections are innocent; a doctrine which must destroy all spiritual religion and sap the foundation of morals. If this be so, then ambition, envy, hatred, malice and revenge, pride and covetousness are all innocent constitutional desires, and may become the motives of holy action. I know that in an early volume of the Ch. Spec. a writer asserted, that these passions, which the common sense of all ages has considered as a part of our nature, are merely purposes formed at a very early period of life. But are revenge, malice, and envy merely purposes to gratify an innocent self-love? Are these vehement and intense passions which are the springs of most human actions, and the sources of all the blackest crimes, are they merely naked purposes to gratify an innocent self-love? The common sense of mankind will never believe that these passions are not a part of their nature; and should this infidel sentiment, that all our native dispositions are innocent, become the prevalent philosophy, it would terminate, as it always has done, in an universal dissolution of morals. I regard the new theology as a system of philosophy based wholly on human reason: opposed to the doctrines of grace; subversive of the law of God; a denial of all moral distinctions in actions; and almost as dangerous to civil society, as to the church of God.

